











# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL Monterey, California



## THESIS

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THE GOLDWATER - NICHOLS DEPARTMENT OF  
DEFENSE ACT  
OF 1986: GENESIS AND POSTSCRIPT

by

Mark T. Seeley

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The Goldwater - Nichols Department of Defense Act  
of 1986: Genesis and Postscript

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This thesis examines the Goldwater - Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 in the light of previous Congressional attempts to legislate Service cooperation by amending the National Security Act of 1947. The hypothesis examined is that attempts to end Service rivalry by amendment have failed because the 1947 Act is itself the product of a legislative attempt to incorporate into an organizational structure two fundamentally incompatible philosophies of how basic defense policy should be formulated. Using an historical approach, this thesis examines the origins of the 1947 Act, the effect of the 1958 amendments on the Kennedy Administration, and the drive for further reform during the Reagan Administration. The conclusion is that while the Goldwater - Nichols Act may increase efficiency in some areas, it will not change the fundamentally competitive nature of the defense budget planning process.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The hypothesis of this thesis is that the National Security Act of 1947 was the product of a Congressional compromise that attempted to accommodate in an organizational structure two fundamentally incompatible philosophies of how the nation's defense policies should best be formulated and implemented, a compromise that was perhaps inevitable given the American political system of checks and balances. Attempts to legislate Service cooperation by amendment since the original Act was passed have failed because Service rivalry is itself less a cause than a symptom of unresolved structural incompatibilities institutionalized within the defense decision-making apparatus.

The search for the proper link between national security policy and process, the question of how best to structure the American defense organization to meet the goals of developing and implementing long-range, coordinated policies for the nation's defense, is one which has plagued and frustrated Congressional and Executive defense reform proponents since World War II. That the defense organizational structure established by the National Security Act of 1947 is generally regarded as having failed in providing this link between policy and process, and has institutionalized not inter-Service cooperation but rather Service competition and parochialism, is evidenced by Congressional amendments to the Act that have increasingly centralized defense decision-making power over the last forty years.

Despite Congressional attempts to strengthen the defense organizational structure by amendment in 1949, 1953 and 1958, the establishment of a system of Service cooperation and coordination is seen today as elusive a goal as it was during the heated Congressional debates of 1945. Congressional attempts to legislate Service cooperation are perceived as having created a Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) structure that, rather than contributing to the nation's defense, actually endangers it:

. . . the JCS frequently acts as a negotiating forum in which each service seeks to maximize its position through bargaining . . . because they (Congress) created a committee of equals, with no mechanism for enforcing a joint military perspective, the JCS is a group that arrives at its positions either by dividing along the lines of competing interests or negotiating a mutually acceptable consensus in which each member supports the claims of the other. [Ref. 1, p. H10392]



Congressional critics have interpreted the failure of the Iranian hostage rescue mission, the deaths of Marines posted in Lebanon, and the perceived communications problems that arose in the Grenada invasion as evidence of the dangers of developing and coordinating defense policy decisions by committee. In an attempt to correct this system, Congress has enacted the "Goldwater - Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986", an act designed to correct the perceived weaknesses in the defense organizational structure established in 1947 by further centralizing defense decision-making power within the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In passing an Act which designates the JCS Chairman as the "principal military advisor to the President" [Ref. 2, chap. 5, sec. 151 (b)], Congress has sought to refine the defense organizational structure by giving the JCS Chairman the power to overrule the opinions of the uniformed Service Chiefs, thus granting him the freedom to transcend single-Service interests and make the "difficult choices" that are required to "deal effectively with fundamental military issues" that impact upon the nation's security [Ref. 1, p. H10392].

The debates over the role that the uniformed military leadership should play in the formulation of national strategy and over which organizational structure would best further the consolidation of diverse Service views into a coherent set of national defense objectives is one which has raged since World War II. The Navy has traditionally argued for Service autonomy and coordination by committee, while the Army has argued for a unified military and a philosophy of "top down" policy guidance. Rather than resolving the conflict between what were fundamentally incompatible Army and Navy views on how best to develop national defense policies, however, the framers of the National Security Act of 1947 sought to structure a defense organization that would accommodate both. Congress wanted a defense organization that would be unified, yet they wanted to retain Service autonomy. They wanted a structure that would benefit from healthy Service competition, but one that would foster cooperation and agreement over basic policies and goals. They sought to structure an organization that ensured a military input into national security policy without threatening civilian control. Perhaps most paradoxically, they wanted to establish an organizational structure geared toward the development of long-range, non-partisan national defense policies that could operate within a political structure that functions through the compromise of conflicting interests and views.

The basic incompatibility of a political process that develops national policy on an ad hoc basis, one that operates through the compromise between competing

factions and interests within a political system of checks and balances, and a national military establishment ostensibly structured to implement those policies in a non-partisan fashion over a much longer time frame is a dilemma Congress has historically chosen not to address. Congress has similarly refused to address the incompatibilities in the philosophies over how national defense policy should be formulated that are institutionalized within the defense structure itself. Indeed, the basic structural contradictions inherent in the defense organization as structured by the National Security Act of 1947 may not be capable of resolution by a Congress that itself only resolves basic policy conflicts through compromise. Rather than address the basic structural links between American defense policy and the process of forming that policy, Congress has instead chosen to attribute the perceived lack of efficiency and cooperation within the defense establishment to the parochial interests of uniformed Services that are seen as unwilling to make a basically sound organizational structure function as it should. Honest disagreements among the military over funding levels and the roles and missions of the Services are seen not as the inevitable consequence of an organization structured upon Service autonomy and competition, but rather as evidence of greed and short-sightedness. Navy opposition to change is seen as motivated not by honest concern, but by historical parochialism:

... the tension between the joint arena and service interests is historical. Prior to World War II, the Navy was the dominant service . . . the heated debates in 1946, over proposals to unify the nation's defense responsibilities, foreshadowed today's problems. The Navy saw no reason then to surrender the power it had accrued and is just as reluctant to do so today . . . The Navy has repeatedly objected to any provision that would weaken their ability to control their own budget, or retain their land or air arms. Today the Navy prefers "de-organization" to reorganization for the same reasons. But the Navy is ignoring the glaring inadequacies of our joint system. [Ref. 3, p. 33]

Congressional unwillingness to address the basic defense establishment's structural incompatibility with its own idealized concept of a unified military, its propensity to attribute Service competition (if, indeed such competition is bad) to procedural rather than structural weakness, has led to a confusion of organizational process with organizational goals. Service competition has come to be seen not as part of the defense organizational process of determining policy goals, but rather the elimination of competition has come to be seen as a goal in itself. Cooperation has come to be seen as synonymous with agreement, the validity of a policy synonymous with the efficiency with which a policy is implemented.

By examining the Goldwater - Nichols Act in the context of past Congressional attempts to reform the Defense Department, one can better evaluate whether it will succeed in furthering the goal of promoting a more unified military establishment, or whether it will simply create the illusion of cooperation at the expense of reducing the options available to the country's civilian political leadership.

Whether the Goldwater - Nichols Act will end Service parochialism and competition is open to question. It may certainly succeed in creating the illusion of homogeneity and cooperation within the military establishment by keeping military Service disagreements over funding levels and policies private. If past Congressional attempts to force Service cooperation through legislation are any guide, however, the Goldwater - Nichols Act will not change the fundamentally competitive nature of the defense appropriations process because it merely refines rather than changes a national security organizational structure that was itself established through the compromise rather than the resolution of conflicting and contradictory organizational goals.

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## II. THE COMPETITION BEGINS

### A. THE CONGRESSIONAL DEBATES

Given the emotions surrounding the end of the second World War, it is not surprising that the testimony given at the post-war Congressional hearings on defense reorganization was emotionally charged as well. The debates centered around a fundamental philosophical difference over how the defense establishment should best be organized. The Army favored military unification to promote the centralization of decision-making power; the Navy wanted a decentralized decision-making structure that retained Service autonomy and the coordination of policy through compromise. Both the War and the Navy Departments produced their war heroes to plead the respective cases of their Services, the Army trotting out Generals Marshall and Doolittle, the Navy producing Admiral Nimitz (Nimitz's testimony was particularly interesting because he had originally favored military unification; by 1945 he had changed his mind, convinced that a MacArthur as Armed Forces Chief of Staff would diminish the Navy's role [Ref. 4, p. 402]).

While spokesmen for both sides tried to sway public opinion both in scholarly journals and in the press (those supporting the Navy view compared the Army's unified military concept to the Nazi German High Command [Ref. 5]), the hearings themselves quickly degenerated into a volatile and hostile circus as charges of parochialism were leveled by both sides. The public's perception of the tone of the testimony given to the Congressional committees can be gauged by the reports in the media. As reported by Newsweek in November of 1945:

The Army - Navy fight over the unification of the armed services turned into such a bitter free-for-all last week that Washington began to call it "The Battle of the Potomac" . . . . The Deputy Chief of Naval Operations, Vice Admiral Charles M. Cooke, rushed to (Assistant Navy Secretary) Hensel's aid. Whether the controversy were postponed or not, the present merger plan would emasculate the Navy, he said, and would "straitjacket the Navy into the status of an Army auxillary" . . . . This raised howls of protest from Lt. Gen. James H. Doolittle. The Air Forces, he declared, have taken over as the nation's first line of defense. Aircraft carriers are already "going into obsolescence," he asserted, and won't be needed at all once land-based planes develop sufficient range. The former Eighth Air-Force commander capped his testimony by accusing Navy higher-ups of "hypocrisy" and "retarded military thinking." Furthermore, he



stated, our B-29 boys are probably resting uneasily in their graves "because of Navy claims that sea power won the war." [Ref. 6, p. 63]

As the debates became more heated, acrimony between the Services grew - acrimony which would leave bitterness and suspicion that would last long after the debates had ended. The Navy suspected the Army Air Force of wanting to do away with carriers; the Marine Corps suspected the Army of wanting to do away with their Service altogether. When Truman, exasperated with the endless procession of officers brought forward to testify, ordered the Marine Commandant to "get those Lieutenant Colonels off the hill and keep them off",

. . . this had a predictable effect. Members of Congress - particularly those from the opposition (Republican) party - complained that the President had placed a "gag" on military opposition to the legislation and ultimately forced withdrawal of any restraining pressure . . . [Ref. 7, p.41]

Truman himself submitted a proposal for defense organization to Congress on the 19th of December, a proposal which largely followed the Army's thinking. Truman's proposal called for a single Defense Department with a single Secretary and a Military Chief of Staff. He ignored the Navy's proposal for a National Security Council. [Ref. 8, p. 20]

Aware that no legislation that unduely favored either the Army or Navy plans could possibly pass a floor vote, Congress decided to compromise, fashioning an Act that incorporated elements of both the Army's "Collins Plan" and the Navy sponsored proposals of Ferdinand Eberstadt. Bills were introduced in both the House and the Senate, and a Joint Committee worked out the details. The National Security Act was passed on July 24, 1947, and President Truman signed it into law two days later.

## **B. ORIGINS OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY ACT**

♥ The Joint Chiefs of Staff structure that was established by the National Security Act of 1947 was an outgrowth of the JCS system designed to coordinate strategy and resolve inter-Service disputes during World War II. Established by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1942, the Joint Chiefs of Staff structure was loosely modeled along the lines of the British Combined Staff. Though its initial purpose was to mediate and resolve conflicting War and Navy Department demands for materiel [Ref. 9, p. 276], the JCS was conceived both as the central advisory agency on grand strategy for the President and as the official U.S. military representation on the Anglo-American Combined Chiefs of Staff [Ref. 9, p. 263].

Though the JCS eventually came to be seen as a reasonably effective coordinating agency for the conduct of the war, its beginnings were inauspicious at best. The Joint Chiefs were required to reach unanimous decisions before policies could be implemented, and the lack of a large staff with clearly defined authority to resolve lesser issues left the JCS at a distinct disadvantage when faced with direct negotiations with the British. Unresolved differences among the JCS members over such issues as the size and membership of the JCS planning staff left them disorganized and embarrassed when faced with a united British front over an issue. The need for reorganization became apparent at the Casablanca conference in January of 1943:

The British had appeared at Casablanca superbly prepared, with papers worked out in detail to support all their own views and to counter any line of argument that might be advanced . . . . In attempting to oppose the skill and speed of this efficient planning organization the efforts of Admiral Cooke, General Wedemeyer, and a handful of colleagues had been virtually overwhelmed. General Wedemeyer cabled his office midway in the conference: "We still have our shirts on but have lost our buttons." The further course of events could be read with approximate accuracy in his message two days later: "The shirt is gone." [Ref. 9, p. 427]

The Joint Chiefs were resolved not to enter another international conference without a fully manned and prepared staff. The lack of an organizational charter defining the roles and authority of the Joint Chiefs, however, was proving a handicap. The disagreements between General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz over areas of command responsibility in the Pacific had resulted in seemingly endless bickering and negotiation, and the lack of a charter was seriously hindering JCS reorganization efforts. When asked by Admiral Leahy for a resolution, however, Roosevelt responded:

It is my understanding that the Joint Chiefs of Staff are encountering no new condition currently requiring clarification of their status or a new definition of their functions. It seems to me that such an order would provide no new benefits and might in some way impair the flexibility of operations. Consequently, I consider the issuance of an Executive order now as superfluous. [Ref. 9, p. 443]

With Roosevelt's refusal to grant a JCS charter,<sup>1</sup> questions and disputes over Service missions and responsibilities continued. With the end of the war approaching, disputes over demobilization priorities were rapidly bringing the question of post-war defense organization to a head. The first call for military unification was issued when

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<sup>1</sup>The Joint Chiefs were to act without a charter until the passage of the National Security Act of 1947.

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General Marshall presented a plan for the post-war unification of the armed forces to the JCS at the end of 1943.

### C. THE FIRST SALVO: THE MARSHALL PLAN

The result of the presentation of the plan for post-war military unification presented by General Marshall was to bring into the open many of the issues that the Navy was not yet prepared to comprehensively address. Its effect was felt not only within the military but also in Congress.

Marshall's plan called for an almost complete unification of the armed forces. It proposed a single Department of Defense headed by a single Secretary of Cabinet rank, under whom would serve Under Secretaries for ground, naval and air forces who would together run the administrative side of the Department. The nation's military would be run by an Armed Forces General Staff composed of the Chiefs of Staff of the Army and (separate) Air Force, the Chief of Naval Operations, a Chief of Staff for Supply, and a proposed Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces. The Armed Forces General Staff was to be directly responsible to the President for all non-administrative military affairs. [Ref. 7, p. 16]

The Joint Chiefs responded to Marshall's proposal by forming a committee to study post-war defense organization, headed by Admiral Richardson. The response of Congress was to convene a subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee. Congress had previously been reluctant to study the issue of post-war defense organization for fear of meddling in the conduct of the war. The most influential Senate war committee, the Senate Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program chaired by Senator Harry S. Truman, had issued a vaguely worded expression of support for the concept of unity of command, but had mainly restricted itself to investigating contracting procedures and the elimination of waste in the Industrial Mobilization Program [Ref. 10, pp. 9-28]. In March of 1944, however, a special subcommittee was convened to study post-war defense organization, chaired by Representative Clifton Woodrum.

The Army presented the committee with a unification proposal which came to be known as the McNarney Plan, a plan which was essentially identical to the proposal of General Marshall [Ref. 7, p. 28]. While the subcommittee eventually acceded to Navy Department arguments that any study of post-war organization should wait until the war's end (the subcommittee dissolved without issuing a recommendation), the testimony that it did receive gave the first indications of the deeply held philosophical



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differences between the Army and the Navy. Though Navy opposition to the concept of unification had not yet crystallized, Navy representatives argued that unification could threaten civilian control of the military and that Service competition was the most effective means of ensuring military efficiency.<sup>2</sup> [Ref. 11, p. 20].

#### D. DEMOBILIZATION AND THE DRIVE TOWARDS UNIFICATION

The respite from inter-Service discord over the unification issue provided by the dissolution of the Woodrum Committee was to be short-lived. With the end of World War II came new conflicts over demobilization priorities, the administration of the occupied territories, and post-war command responsibilities, conflicts which increasingly split the Joint Chiefs along Service lines. New antagonisms were brewing between General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz in the Pacific, with MacArthur arguing that command should be determined by the dominant Service occupying a region and Nimitz contending that post-war commands should be designated strictly by area (as the dominant area in the Pacific region was the ocean, command in that region would thus be a Navy responsibility) [Ref. 12, p. 175].

Faced with mounting domestic dissatisfaction over the pace of demobilization and the rising dissension among the Joint Chiefs, the Senate Military Affairs Committee convened hearings to consider post-war defense organizational structure on October 7, 1945. The Army submitted into testimony as its official position a reorganization plan which was presented by General J. L. Collins. The Collins Plan closely mirrored the earlier Marshall and McNarney plans, again calling for a single Defense Department to be administered by an armed forces Secretary, a Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces who was to directly command all armed forces in all theaters, and a separate Air Force. [Ref. 7, pp. 48-49]

The Navy raised the now familiar objections that unification of the Services under a single Chief of Staff would result in over-centralization and the diminution of civilian authority. Navy objections to a unified defense establishment were based on the fear that, because of its size, the Army would dominate any such system, and as the Army had no appreciation of the value or uses of sea power, the Navy's size and influence would be diminished [Ref. 12, p. 240].

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<sup>2</sup>The JCS committee issued a report on April 11, 1945 favoring a single Defense Secretary. Admiral Richardson dissented from the findings of the report.



The Joint Chiefs themselves were stalemated over the issue of post-war Service missions and roles; they finally dropped an internal attempt to define those roles in 1946 as a "subject incapable of resolution at our level" [Ref. 12, p. 246].

The Navy was well aware in 1945 that the Army had President Truman's support at least for the concept of military unification; he had said as much in a March 14, 1945 edition of *Colliers Magazine*. The Navy was also aware of the danger of appearing obstructionist for purely parochial reasons. As stated in a letter from the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs to Navy Secretary James Forrestal:

I doubt very much if any useful purpose would be served by merely objecting to plans which propose the consolidation of the War and Navy Departments. It would seem to me, that those of us who feel such a consolidation would not be effective should attempt to formulate a plan which would be more effective in accomplishing the objective sought . . . as an alternative to the proposal now pending that the Army and Navy Departments be consolidated into a Department of National Defense. [Ref. 13, p. IV]

Accordingly, in May, 1945 Forrestal asked former Munitions Board Chairman Ferdinand Eberstadt to conduct an objective study of the form which a post-war reorganization of the military should take.

The Eberstadt Report was a brilliant piece of work in that it codified Navy objections to military unification in a logical, systematic fashion while proposing an alternative that was in many respects far more drastic than anything proposed by the Army. In the summary of his report, Eberstadt wrote: — won the day for Navy

In theory and in logic unification appears highly plausible. It looks good on paper. It sounds good in words. There are many appealing arguments in support of unification, but it lacks equally appealing support in actual practice . . . . Our present situation calls for action far more drastic and far-reaching than simply unification of the military services. It calls for a complete realignment of our governmental organizations to serve our national security in the light of our new world power and position, our new international commitments and risks and the epochal new scientific discoveries. [Ref. 13, pp. 3-4]

Among the organizational changes proposed by the Eberstadt report were:

- Three separate military departments, including the creation of a Department of Air, each headed by a civilian Secretary of Cabinet rank,
- The maintenance of separate Navy and Army air arms,

- the creation of a National Security Council, chaired by the President. It would be charged with the formulation and coordination of both overall military and political policy, including the review of a combined military budget. Its membership would include the Service Secretaries, the Secretary of State, and the Chairman of the National Resources Board.
- the continuation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff structure, who would be charged with the responsibility for the preparation of joint strategic and logistics plans.
- the creation of a National Security Resources Board, and,
- the creation of a Munitions Board to coordinate Service procurement. [Ref. 13]

While the Eberstadt Report stressed that unity of command was essential for the forces in the field, the coordination of policy could best be accomplished not by unification but through the standardization of procedure and the equal emphasis on all of the Services in order to prevent a misbalance in military force structures or a diminution of civilian authority. In stressing the advantages of "competitive effort and even reasonable conflicts of view" between the Services [Ref. 13, p. 38], Eberstadt noted that:

Our military leaders were unusually well qualified in the strategic and operational phases (of World War II). Judged by the results, the strategic plans of the Joint Chiefs of Staff were preeminently satisfactory. They were accomplished without sacrifice of, but rather because of, adequate consideration of the views of Army, Navy, and Air through the Joint Chiefs of Staff. [Ref. 13, p. 23]

With the findings of the Eberstadt Report made known, the lines for a Congressional battle over defense reorganization were clearly drawn, with Army supporters favoring a unified defense structure with a single Defense Secretary and a single Armed Forces Chief of Staff, and Navy supporters favoring Service autonomy and the coordination of policies through a committee structure. Those who expected a fierce legislative struggle were not disappointed.

#### **E. THE COMPROMISE: THE NATIONAL SECURITY ACT OF 1947**

The National Security Act of 1947 stands as a classic example of legislative compromise. The Act was intended to unify the military while retaining Service autonomy; the intent of Congress as stated in the bill was to provide for the "authoritative coordination and unified direction (of the armed services) under civilian control but not to merge them" [Ref. 14, sec. 2]. While the Act established a single Secretary of Defense (as recommended by the Collins Plan), he was to head not an Executive Department but rather the "National Military Establishment" [Ref. 14, sec.

201 (a)]. In deference to the Army, the Act established a War Council and a separate Air Force, but in deference to the Navy no Armed Forces Chief of Staff was established to head the JCS [Ref. 14, sec. 210-211]. From the Eberstadt Report, the Congress incorporated the proposals for a National Security Council [Ref. 14, sec. 101] and a Munitions Board charged with recommending the "assignment of procurement responsibilities among the several military services and to plan for standardization of specifications" [Ref. 14, sec. 213 (c)(3)].

The contradictions embodied in the National Security Act are obvious. The Act established a Secretary of Defense to act as "the principal assistant to the President in all matters relating to the national security" while at the same time providing that "nothing herein shall prevent the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Navy, or the Secretary of the Air Force from presenting to the President . . . any report or recommendation relating to his department which he may deem necessary". The Secretary of Defense was to coordinate the operations of the Services, but he was to establish only "general policies and programs for the National Military Establishment", exercise only "general direction, authority and control". While he was to "supervise and coordinate the budget estimates" of the Services, the Services themselves were to remain separately administered and prepare their budgets individually. [Ref. 14, sec. 202]

In attempting to satisfy the proponents of the Army and the Navy reorganization proposals in one administrative structure, Congress incorporated the most incompatible elements of each into the National Security Act. In retaining Service autonomy and the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a loosely knit committee of equals, Congress had attempted to satisfy Navy proponents of a "bottom - up" philosophy of policy formulation; by establishing a single Defense Secretary, Congress had incorporated elements of the Army's "top - down" approach, but without giving the Secretary the authority to enforce his views. In attempting to satisfy both constituencies, Congress had fully satisfied neither.



### III. DEALING WITH THE GORDIAN KNOT OF REFORM

#### A. THE PRESSURE FOR REFORM

The National Security Act of 1947 would eventually have proven unworkable under any circumstances, but world events served to exacerbate the structural weaknesses of the newly-established defense organization almost immediately. The Joint Chiefs of Staff had envisioned that a triumverate of the "Big Three" (the U.S., Great Britain, and the Soviet Union) would work together to maintain international order following World War II [Ref. 15, pp. 13-18]. U.S. Minister George Kenan's "long telegram" from Moscow in 1946 quickly disabused them of that notion, however, as Kenan detailed what he saw as Soviet post-war expansionist aims [Ref. 8, p.6].

Adding to the strains imposed upon the Joint Chiefs by the changing international system were the continual domestic demobilization pressures. The massive cutbacks in post-war military funding, coupled with the insurgencies in Greece and Turkey that were to lead to the Truman Doctrine, emphasized the urgent need for inter-Service cooperation to prioritize where cuts in funding should best be made if the U.S. were to continue to meet its commitments. The Service Chiefs, however, were still suspicious of each other following the bitter debates of the reorganization hearings, and were in no mood to compromise. While 1947 meetings in Key West, Washington and Newport R.I. served to partially clarify Service roles and missions [Ref. 12, p. 174], disagreements over Service funding remained unresolved.

The newly-appointed Secretary of Defense, James Forrestal, was clearly exasperated both at the inability of the Joint Chiefs to reach agreement and on his own powerlessness to enforce one. In his first report to Congress, Forrestal wrote:

The nerve center of unification lies in the Joint Chiefs of Staff, under whose guidance substantial strides have been taken in reconciling divergent professional opinions . . . . I would be less than candid, however, if I did not underline the fact that there are still great areas in which the viewpoints of the services have not come together. [Ref. 16, p. 9]

Forrestal saw the balancing of the "contrasting responsibilities" of the Services against the "difficult decisions in the allocations of funds" as the root of the problem:



It is out of the competition inherent in the division of total funds allocated to the National Military Establishment that the controversies arise . . . . Many officers in the Air Force honestly believe that the carrier will have a limited use in any war that we may fight in the future, and, therefore, challenge the maintenance of the important carrier task forces. These misgivings are honestly held, as undoubtedly are the Navy's regarding the capabilities of the long-range bomber. [Ref. 16, pp. 10-11]

To improve coordination, Forrestal recommended that a Chairman be established for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He also recommended an amendment to the National Security Act to increase his own authority:

The statutory authority of the the Secretary of Defense should be materially strengthened . . . by making it clear that the Secretary of Defense has the responsibility for exercising "direction, authority, and control" over the departments and agencies of the National Military Establishment. (At present, that statute provides that it shall be the duty of the Secretary of Defense to establish "general policies and programs" and to exercise "general direction, authority, and control." The word "general" should be deleted in both of the passages just quoted . . . .) [Ref. 16, p. 3]

## **B. • THE 1949 AMENDMENTS**

Based upon the Forrestal report (the proposals of which were supported both by President Truman and a Hoover Commission report [Ref. 7, p. 57]), Congress passed a bill in 1949 amending the National Security Act of 1947, a bill which incorporated Forrestal's recommendations. The offending word "general" was dropped from the definition of the Defense Secretary's duties; henceforth he would be the head of an Executive Department rather than a "National Military Establishment". Further, the Service Departments' status was reduced from those of Executive Departments to Military Departments within the Department of Defense, and the Services lost their right to submit their budgets directly to the President. The amendment additionally established a Chairman for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. [Ref. 17]

If the 1949 Amendment was expected to quell Service rivalry, it failed to meet that goal. The provision concerning the Joint Chiefs of Staff confused rather than clarified their role in providing advice to the President. While the Chairman was to "take precedence over all other officers in the Armed Services", he was not to "exercise military command over the Joint Chiefs of Staff . . . ." [Ref. 16]. In effect, the Amendment merely added another member to the committee of equals.

Truman (and later Eisenhower) was becoming increasingly enamored with the Air Force concept of massive retaliation (a concept derived from the Air Force interpretation of the results of the Strategic Bombing Survey) because it provided a seemingly plausible method of attaining "defense on the cheap". As the proponents of massive retaliation gained influence, so too did the concept, to the point where it became the bedrock of Eisenhower's "New Look" program. [Ref. 18, pp. 1-18]

The rising prominence of the massive retaliation concept as the basis for U.S. national defense policy served to further confusion and dissension among the Joint Chiefs. The cancellation of the carrier "United States" in favor of the Air Force B-36 bomber program confirmed the Navy's worst fears about the diminution of the role of sea power in U.S. defense policy [Ref. 8, p. 53]. Further conflict among the Joint Chiefs arose after the election of President Eisenhower, who was determined to enforce a JCS policy of "unanimity at all costs".

The Joint Chiefs took their statutory responsibility as the "principal military advisors to the President" [Ref. 14, sec. 210] seriously. The Chief of Naval Operations and the Army Chief of Staff were arguing that the increasing overreliance on the concept of massive retaliation was creating a serious imbalance in the nation's military force structure. Under Eisenhower, however, such advice was unwelcome. In a series of articles published in the Saturday Evening Post in 1956, recently retired Army Chief of Staff Ridgway stated:

As Chief of Staff, I quickly learned . . . with a certain sense of shock, that sometimes I was not expected to present my reasoned military judgement to Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson. On the contrary, incessant pressure was brought to bear on me, seeking to persuade me to make my views conform to a preconceived politico-military "party line." I also learned that no matter how strongly my views might differ from those of higher authority, it was not to be expected that I would let my nonconcurrence publicly be known. It was essential, I learned, that the policies of the Defense Department should be presented to the public as being the unanimous recommendations of the nation's top military men. [Ref. 19, p. 46]

This view of life on the JCS was echoed by Ridgway's successor, General Matthew Taylor:

. . . the new Administration looked upon membership on the JCS somewhat differently from the Truman administration. The new Chiefs were regarded as members of the Administration "team", working for the objectives of that team under the guidance of their civilian superiors. In formulating their military

advice, it was hoped that they would take into account the views and feelings of these superiors and avoid submitting embarrassing or contentious recommendations. [Ref. 18, p.30]

Such revelations of contention and disharmony among the Joint Chiefs over basic national security policy were dismaying both to the public and to Congress. President Kennedy came to office determined to more closely coordinate national security policy and end JCS dissent. It was felt that the 1958 Amendments to the National Security Act would give him the power to do so.

### C. THE 1958 AMENDMENTS

The 1958 amendments to the National Security Act of 1947 were the capstone to the ongoing drive to centralize the decision making power within the Defense Department in the hands of the Secretary of Defense. Unable to legislate cooperation among the heads of the uniformed military Services in the years immediately following World War II through outright military unification (due largely to the objections of the Navy), Congress instead focussed its efforts upon the need for the civilian leadership of the Defense Department to provide coordination within the defense establishment. The perceived need for increasingly unified direction of the Department of Defense resulted in amendments to the National Security Act in both 1949 and 1953 which provided for an increasingly active role for the Defense Secretary. With the passage of the Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1958, the Defense Secretary was granted his broadest statutory authority to date, including the authority to transfer, consolidate and abolish the functions and roles of the military services. All that remained to complete the process of an indirect merger of the armed forces under the authority newly granted its civilian leadership was the appointment of a Defense Secretary with the ability and will to use that authority. That man was Robert S. McNamara.

An understanding of the successes and failures of the McNamara era is crucial to a study of post World War II congressional attempts to legislate inter-Service cooperation. When McNamara replaced Thomas Gates Jr. as Secretary of Defense in January of 1961, he and his assistants were determined to end the inter-Service rivalry that had plagued the Truman and Eisenhower administrations. Their goal was to depoliticize the decision-making process for defense policy, replacing the traditional adversarial system with a technically oriented management system based on system analysis. For McNamara, efficient decision making was not a political process, based on conciliation and compromise among a plurality of interests, but rather it was a



technical process, where a single actor based his decisions upon rational procedures that measured alternative choices against an established standard of efficiency. His philosophy was that the same procedures and management techniques used by large corporations could, if properly applied, be used to effectively manage the Department of Defense.

It would intuitively seem that the use of a rational, highly quantitative approach to the allocation of limited defense resources would have ended inter-service rivalry by clearly showing the most cost effective, economical means with which to meet national security objectives. Why, then, was there such hostility between McNamara and the uniformed military? Why has service parochialism been perceived as, if not greater, at least as great in the years following the McNamara era as when he took office?

The highly centralized control McNamara was able to exert over Defense Department policies from 1961 to 1968 would not have been possible before the passage of the 1958 amendments to the National Security Act of 1947. The authority of the Secretary of Defense had grown steadily in the eleven years since 1947. This continual reappraisal and strengthening of the Secretary's role within the National Defense Establishment was due both to Service infighting over the control of nuclear assets and delivery platforms, and to the realization that, in peacetime, real authority lay not in operational but in budgetary control. Congressional reformers increasingly shifted the focus of their efforts from refining the role played by the JCS in the formulation of policy to that of strengthening the ability of the Defense Secretary to enforce policy.

As outlined earlier, The role Congress envisioned for the Secretary of Defense as reflected in the National Security Act of 1947 was essentially a passive one. Though Truman (siding with the Army) had originally wanted a unification of the armed forces under a single chief of staff and with a single military budget [Ref. 7, pp. 37-38], Navy opposition (based on fears that a strong armed forces chief of staff or Defense Secretary might abrogate or diminish Navy and Marine Corps roles) in Congress and in the press forced the compromise that was the 1947 Act. In the act as passed, there was no provision for an armed forces chief of staff, nor even for a Department of Defense; there was merely a National Military Establishment which preserved the departments of the Army and Navy and created the Air Force Department. While the office of the Secretary of Defense was created, with the Secretary designated ". . . the principal assistant to the President in all matters relating to the national security" [Ref.



14 sec.202(a)], he was to establish only “. . . general policies and programs . . .” [Ref. 14 sec.202(a)(1)] for the services, exercise only “. . . general direction, authority and control . . .” [Ref. 14 sec.202(a)(2)]. Most importantly, the services were still free to submit their own budget requests. While the Secretary would “supervise and coordinate the preparation of the budget estimates . . . nothing herein contained shall prevent the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Navy, or the Secretary of the Air Force from presenting to the President . . . any report or recommendation relating to his department which he may deem necessary . . .” [Ref. 14 sec.202] The Secretary of Defense, then, was to serve the role of an essentially powerless executive assistant to the President, merely coordinating the work of the military services that were still separately administrated.

The push for further reform began immediately after passage of the 1947 Act. The authority granted the Defense Secretary was clearly inadequate to satisfy the purpose for which the Act had been written (“ . . . to provide for the effective strategic direction of the armed forces and . . . for their effective integration into an effective team of land, naval, and air forces” [Ref. 14 sec.2]). Even James Forrestal, who as Secretary of the Navy had argued against a strong role for the position of the Secretary of Defense,<sup>3</sup> quickly became disillusioned as Secretary of Defense with the inability of the Joint Chiefs to compromise on policy decisions that involved budgetary allocations. By 1949 he too was arguing for increased authority for the position of the Defense Secretary [Ref. 7, p.55].

Eisenhower had favored unification of the military since World War II. While still a general, he had favored unification under a single uniformed chief of staff. As President, however, he focused more upon the role of the Secretary of Defense [Ref. 20, p. 56]. The 1949 amendments to the National Security Act revoked the right of the Service secretaries to submit their budgets directly to the President,<sup>4</sup> effectively giving the Secretary of Defense more much needed “. . . direction, authority and control” [Ref. 17, sec. 202(b)] over the Department of Defense.

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<sup>3</sup>As cited by James Roherty, Forrestal argued: “There is no human being capable, in my judgement, of sitting on top of all that and assuring that you have the fine integration and efficiency which it is presumed would result from that consolidation [of power within the hands of the Secretary of Defense]” [Ref. 20, p. 25].

<sup>4</sup>It also established the position of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

• The 1953 amendments gave the Secretary further budgetary control by establishing six additional Assistant Secretaries of Defense [Ref. 21, sec.3] (the National Security Act of 1947 had limited the Secretary to three assistants, each paid an annual salary of \$10,000).

• It was the Defense Reorganization Act of 1958, however, which proved to be the watershed: it gave the Defense Secretary the statutory authority he needed to exert centralized control over the services through the budgetary process. While not providing for an actual merger of the armed forces, the 1958 Act gave the Defense Secretary the power to take any steps he deemed necessary to improve the efficiency and economical operation of the Defense Department, including authority enabling " . . . the transfer, reassignment, abolition, and consolidation of functions" of the Services.<sup>5</sup> [Ref. 22, sec. 3(c)(1)]. Further, the 1958 Act gave the Secretary the power to establish unified and specified commands, and it put the operational control of those commands in the hands of the Defense Secretary [Ref. 22, sec. 5(j)].

Most importantly (from a budgetary aspect), the 1958 Act placed " . . . the responsibilities of the Department of Defense in the field of basic and applied research and development which pertain to weapons systems" [Ref. 22, sec. 9(2)] firmly under the control of the Defense Secretary. Although Congress specifically preserved the rights of the Joint Chiefs to approach Congress with any defense related recommendations they deemed proper, it was the provision of the 1958 Act giving the Defense Secretary control of weapons systems research and development which enabled McNamara to establish such firm, centralized control over the military Services. Most defense appropriations (retirement, wages, etc.) are fixed from year to year by statute, and are therefor not subject to administrative manipulation. It is through the control of funding for new weapons systems, then, that the Services seek to establish their prestige and the primacy of their missions within the defense establishment.

With the control of these funds and the ability to transfer or abolish the functions of the military Services, the Secretary of Defense could now effectively manipulate the power and missions of the various Services as he saw fit. Armed with this statutory authority and the management techniques associated with program budgeting, Robert McNamara sought to end inter-Service rivalry and parochialism.

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<sup>5</sup>After the notification of Congress.

## IV. THE SISYPHUS EFFECT: MCNAMARA'S ATTEMPT TO END PAROCHIALISM

### A. PRECONCEPTIONS AND PROGRAM BUDGETING

Robert McNamara entered office as Secretary of Defense in January of 1961 determined to take a more active role than that assumed by his predecessors:

When I became Secretary of Defense in 1961, I felt that either of two broad philosophies of management could be followed by the man at the head of this great establishment. He could play an essentially passive role - a judicial role. In this role the Secretary would make the decisions required of him by law by approving recommendations made to him. On the other hand, The Secretary of Defense could play an active role providing aggressive leadership - questioning, suggesting alternatives, proposing objectives and stimulating progress. This active role represents my own philosophy of management. I became convinced that there was room for and need of this kind of management philosophy in the Department of Defense. [Ref. 23, p. 13]

For McNamara, a more active role for the Defense Secretary was necessary because of what he saw as the disjointed, uncoordinated strategies developed by the individual Services to justify their individual funding levels and force structures. For Thomas Gates, McNamara's immediate predecessor as Secretary of Defense, the process of adversarial politics (institutionalized within the defense budgetary process) served a useful purpose. The plurality of interests represented by the uniformed heads of the three services helped to ensure that all viewpoints were fully aired, and provided for increased flexibility in the budgetary process [Ref. 20, pp. 40-46]. For McNamara, adversarial politics simply led to a chaotic jumble of programs that were mismatched and wasteful of resources:

We found that the three military departments had been establishing their requirements independently of each other. The results could be described as fairly chaotic. Army planning, for example, was based primarily on a long war of attrition, Air Force planning was based largely on a short war of nuclear bombardment. Consequently the Army was stating a requirement for stocking months if not years of combat supplies against the event of a sizeable conventional conflict. The Air Force requirements had to be measured in days, and not very many days at that. Either approach, consistently followed, might make some sense.



The two combined could not possibly make sense. What we needed was a coordinated strategy seeking objectives actually attainable with the military resources available.<sup>6</sup> [Ref. 24, p. 90]

For McNamara, the way to coordinate strategy was to decentralize the execution of the budgetary process while centralizing the decision making process for defense policy. Further organizational restructuring of the Defense Department to centralize control was unnecessary; what was needed was a method to control the management of decision making. By controlling the tools of management in an organization, the methodology of decision making, you control the organization. Based upon his previous experience in the Ford Motor Corporation and greatly influenced by the work of Charles Hitch, McNamara felt that effective strategy at any given time was determined by two variables, those being technology and the resources available to purchase that technology. By using a methodology which measured (against an established standard) the costs of purchasing a technology against the benefits that the technology provided, the problem of choosing the weapons systems that drove strategy could be reduced to a relatively straightforward economic problem. The methodology which McNamara used was Program Budgeting.

The concept of program budgeting was not new when McNamara took office. Works on program budgeting had been published in the early 1950's by Frederick Mosher and others [Ref. 26]. The implementation of a program budgeting system throughout the Department of Defense as a whole, however, was new. The man responsible for implementing the Planning, Programming and Budgeting System (PPBS) within the Defense Department was McNamara's Defense Comptroller, Charles J. Hitch. Hitch had helped develop the program budgeting system in the 1950s while serving as an analyst for the RAND Corporation, and had coauthored a landmark work on the subject published in 1960 [Ref. 27].

PPBS was envisioned as a rational system for choosing between the wide array of choices in weapons systems offered by the post World War II technological revolution, choices necessitated by the comparative lack of resources available in a peacetime economy. In theory, PPBS would enable a decision maker to select the most cost effective system which could reasonably satisfy a strategic objective by quantifiably weighing the alternatives against each other based on economic criterion.

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<sup>6</sup>A point seemingly lost to McNamara is that both scenarios are plausible, and that provisions should probably be made for both. This point is more fully addressed in Chapter 3 of [Ref. 25].



Traditionally, budget requests to Congress had been developed and structured around budget line-item requests (such as maintenance, training, pay, etc.). Incremental increases in funding were requested as the cost of producing a particular system or funding a particular program increased. The problem with this system of budgeting was its verticality: the relationship between funds requested for one line item category and those for another was often impossible to determine by looking at the budget alone (even when both line items pertained to the same weapon system). This effectively veiled the relationship between any particular line-item request and the policy objective for which the request was made. The theoretical result was that obsolete programs could continue to be funded indefinitely without anyone examining whether or not that program continued to serve a useful purpose.

Theoretically, program budgeting would end this practice by focussing on outputs rather than inputs. With program budgeting, all expenses relating to a particular objective or mission, be they training of personnel, weapons systems procurement costs, or maintenance, would be grouped together as an output (or "program") which cut across service lines.<sup>7</sup> Further, rather than focussing on one particular fiscal year, program expenses were to be estimated for the entire life cycle of meeting an objective. These programs could then be compared with alternative programs for meeting the same objective. Using cost-effectiveness analysis, priorities would be assigned to programs, with the most cost effective of the alternatives being allocated funds in the budget. Program budgeting, then, was to serve a dual purpose: it would highlight the relationship of every defense program to a specific strategic objective, and it would increase efficiency by ensuring that only the most cost effective alternatives to meeting an objective were funded.<sup>8</sup> Nine major defense program categories were designated by McNamara in 1961: strategic retaliatory forces, continental defense forces, general purpose forces, airlift and sealift, reserve and guard forces, research and development, general support, retired pay, and military assistance [Ref. 28, pp. 83-84].

Program budgeting rested on two assumptions. The first was that the presentation of alternatives to meet specified military objectives would not only be accepted but encouraged; this would require the active participation of the uniformed

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<sup>7</sup>This last point is particularly important for those missions to which more than one service contributes. Both the Navy and the Air Force, for instance, contribute to the mission of nuclear deterrence and retaliation.

<sup>8</sup>An excellent summary of the program budgeting concept appears in [Ref. 28].

military in the planning process. The second assumption was one of measureability. Unless all of the variables of the various alternatives available could be quantified, the selection criteria would ultimately be reduced to one of subjective judgement, the very thing McNamara was trying to avoid. The importance of measureability to the success of PPBS was stressed by Alain Enthoven, McNamara's Assistant Secretary of Defense for Systems Analysis, in a speech given at the Naval War College on June 6, 1963. For the system to succeed, ". . . all calculations, assumptions, empirical data, and judgements [must] be described in such a way that they can be subjected to checking, testing, criticism, debate, discussion, *and possible refutation*" (emphasis added) [Ref. 29, p. 154]. How does one measure judgement? Enthoven does not say.

The problem of quantification becomes even more important when developing criteria for prioritizing strategic objectives. In private business, the objective is easily quantifiable: it is reflected in profit. Applying measureability to strategic objectives, however, is not so easily accomplished. How does one measure which of the strategic retaliatory forces is better at meeting the goal of deterrence? How does one measure a the proper mix of strategic nuclear forces and conventional ground forces in Europe to meet the objective of deterring aggression?

Nevertheless, McNamara held high hopes that the establishment of PPBS would increase efficiency and eliminate service parochialism. Whereas in the past

Each service tended to exercise its own priorities, favoring its own unique missions to the detriment of joint missions, striving to lay the groundwork for an increased share of the budget in future years . . . protecting the overall size of its own forces even at the cost of readiness [Ref. 30, p.24],

the use of program budgeting would allow the defense leadership to focus on

. . . our principal concern . . . centered on what is required by the defense establishment as a whole to perform a particular military mission - not on what is required by a particular service to perform its part of that mission. [Ref. 30, p. 23]

The lack of success of PPBS in accomplishing this purpose, and the reasons for the failure of PPBS and cost-effectiveness analysis to end perceived inter-Service rivalry are illustrated by how the system was applied to a specific case: the TFX decision.

## B. THE TFX DECISION

The decision to develop and produce the Tactical Fighter, Experimental (TFX) was an important one for Defense Secretary McNamara. His first opportunity to apply the concepts of cost-effectiveness analysis to a major weapons system purchase, the TFX development and production contract would be what at that time was the largest single aircraft contract ever awarded. The TFX was to extensively utilize new technology. It was the first production combat aircraft to employ variable swept-wing technology, the first to combine low-altitude supersonic and high-altitude subsonic performance characteristics, and it was the first aircraft designed from its conception to be used by two different Services.

Most importantly, it was McNamara's first opportunity to exercise control over the budgetary process in the face of united uniformed military opposition. Using cost-effectiveness management techniques as justification for the use of his statutory authority to control the defense budget,

McNamara not only retained the loyalty of the secretaries of the Navy and the Air Force, but also utilized them to carry through decisions that were highly unpopular in both these services. McNamara was able to achieve, preserve, and establish a unanimity of viewpoint among the highest civilian officials of the Defense Department. [Ref. 31, p. 1]

How, then, with the civilian leadership of the Defense Department firmly supporting him throughout the decision making process, did McNamara's use of cost-effectiveness management techniques result in the purchase of the "second best airplane at the higher price"? [Ref. 32, p. 1]

The TFX was originally conceived by the Air Force in 1959 as a low-level supersonic attack and fighter aircraft to replace the Tactical Air Command's (TAC) ageing F-105 fighter aircraft.<sup>9</sup> The Air Force wanted an aircraft with the capability to take off and land on unprepared grass airstrips, fly at subsonic speed from the United States to Europe without refueling, and dash in at low-level supersonic speed for close ground support. These capabilities were then incompatible in a single aircraft: supersonic flight requires the use of a short, swept-back wing design to reduce drag, while overseas flight requires a long, broad wing design to increase lift and conserve fuel. This problem of design incompatibility was resolved in 1960 when the Langley

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<sup>9</sup>The following summary of events as chronicled in Robert J. Art's *The TFX Decision: McNamara and the Military* (Little, Brown and Company, 1968) [Ref. 31], to which the author is indebted.



Research Center developed feasible variable swept-wing technology, and the Air Force immediately began work on preliminary developmental studies.

Concurrently, in early 1960 the Navy obtained tentative approval to develop a replacement aircraft for the F-4H tactical fighter. Navy requirements called for a single-mission aircraft centered on an air defense capability, an aircraft with long on-station endurance able to accommodate a highly complex missile system.

When McNamara took office, he saw an immediate opportunity to save money by utilizing the multi-mission capabilities of the proposed Air Force TFX for all of the Services. The aerodynamic characteristics of the planes needed by both the Navy and the Air Force were essentially the same. If the tactical requirements of both services could be filled by the same (or essentially the same) aircraft, enormous savings could be realized through economies of scale and a simplified logistics network. On February 14, 1961 (through his Director of Defense Research and Engineering, Herbert York) McNamara ordered all Services to study the feasibility of developing a joint tactical fighter, using the Air Force TFX proposal as a baseline.

On March 9, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research and Development Dr. James Wakelin reported that the proposed Air Force TFX was unsuitable for Navy use. Lacking the room for the large radar required for the complex missile system the Navy envisioned, the TFX would not even be as capable for Navy missions as the F-4H fighter that the Navy was seeking to replace. The issue of carrier compatibility was also raised.

McNamara responded by ordering York to form a Committee on Tactical Air to study all defense tactical air requirements through 1971. Deciding that the close air support mission could not be accommodated by the TFX, the committee recommended to McNamara that a separate aircraft be developed to suit Army and Marine Corps requirements. The TFX, however, would still be utilized to fill both the Air Force's air superiority requirements and the Navy's need for close air defense of the fleet.

The Air Force and Navy continued to object. The Navy had no need for a low-level supersonic flight capability; the Air Force bombing role did not call for a large radar or missile capability. By August 22 a stalemate had been reached, each Service feeling that a compromise of its own requirements would severely degrade the capabilities needed by both services.

Seeing that the Air Force and Navy would not cooperate voluntarily, McNamara decided to force an agreement. In his "Memorandum of September 1",<sup>10</sup> McNamara

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<sup>10</sup>The memorandum was prepared for McNamara's signature by A. W.



ordered that the TFX be developed for use by both Services. He specified the aircraft length, maximum weight, minimum ordnance-carrying capability, and radar dish and bomb bay constraints. Further, the memorandum specified that changes to the Air Force design needed to accommodate Navy requirements be held to a minimum. The Services were ordered to resolve any remaining disagreements over design specifications with York's office acting as referee.

The Services issued a request for TFX design proposals to the aircraft industry on October 1, 1961. Proposals were submitted by six aircraft companies and were reviewed (with Navy participation) under the auspices of the Air Force Source Selection Board process.<sup>11</sup> From January through November 1962, four different meetings of the design evaluation group were held, the competition having quickly narrowed to consideration of two proposals (those of Boeing Aircraft Corporation and General Dynamics).

The recommendation of all four evaluation groups was that the contract be awarded to Boeing, recommendations approved by the military Source Selection Board as well as the Air Force Chief of Staff and the Chief of Naval Operations. Based upon the design proposals (which existed only on paper), the uniformed military felt that Boeing exhibited a better understanding of the design problems than did General Dynamics. The Boeing design incorporated newer technology, greater aircraft capability, and Boeing had quoted a lower per-unit cost.<sup>12</sup>

On November 24, 1962, the Pentagon publically announced McNamara's decision to award the TFX design and production contract to General Dynamics - Grumman.

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Blackburn of the Tactical Weapons Office.

<sup>11</sup>The Air Force had been given overall responsibility for the project's development.

<sup>12</sup>The Source Selection Board report of November 2, 1962 unanimously recommended Boeing be selected as the contractor for the TFX, citing as its reasons:

- "(a) Superiority in all major aspects of operational capability
- (b) Lower quoted cost
- (c) Positive ground deceleration mechanism
- (d) Greater weapons selectivity and carrying ability
- (e) Less risk of foreign object damage and missile exhaust degradation of engine performance.

It is the unanimous opinion of the Board that competition between the contractors has achieved its purpose and any further refinements of competitive design is unjustified." Quoted in [Ref. 32, Exhibit no. 19, p. 13].

### C. THE REASONING BEHIND THE DECISION

Two major decisions concerning the TFX were made by McNamara against the advice of the uniformed military: the decision to produce a common aircraft to satisfy both Air Force and Navy tactical requirements, and the decision to award the production contract to General Dynamics.

McNamara's decision to produce a common aircraft for both the Air Force and the Navy was motivated by both a concern for costs and by an underlying suspicion of service motives for wanting separately produced aircraft. The development of two separate aircraft would undoubtedly have been enormously expensive, perhaps more expensive than the country could afford. McNamara saw commonality as a solution, since (as he saw it) the aerodynamic characteristics of the aircraft needed by both services were roughly similar. Moreover, the incredible amount of new technology to be incorporated into the design of the TFX would make the plane extremely versatile, so versatile that (in McNamara's judgement), with only a minimum number of changes, the TFX could be adapted for Navy use. After all, the Navy was looking for a single-mission aircraft, and the Air Force TFX would have multi-mission capability. By utilizing a common airframe, savings could be realized in a number of different areas. The development and tooling costs involved in producing a common aircraft would be much less than the costs involved in producing two. A large production run would result in further savings through economies of scale, and savings in the costs of maintaining the aircraft (spare parts, etc.) and training its pilots would reduce overall program costs still further.

McNamara came into office feeling that "an important part of his job is to stimulate innovation and reform" [Ref. 29, p. 153]. When the Navy reported (in response to McNamara's original order to study the feasibility of a common aircraft) that the TFX would be unsuitable for Navy use, McNamara apparently interpreted that report as a reflection of inter-Service rivalry, another example of the Navy's wanting a separate aircraft simply to protect parochial Navy interests. Indeed, this suspicion was voiced within the uniformed military itself by TAC Commander General F. F. Everest, who focussed on the trans-oceanic capability proposed for the TFX:

The Navy's problem was different . . . carriers can do the ferrying. The Navy didn't need the plane and we thought they would see the TFX as a threat. If someone can operate without relying on this forty-knot barge called a carrier, it demolishes the carrier. Carriers did a great job in the Pacific, but the TFX could make them less important: four hours to Europe vs. four days, from base to the Mediterranean. [Ref. 33, p. 180]

A point apparently overlooked by both Everest and McNamara, however, was that Navy concerns about carrier compatibility were genuine:

It (the Navy) had long ago established the fact that it needed relatively lighter planes for carrier landings (thus would need a 55,000 - pound TFX, compared to the 75,000 - pound Air Force design) with stronger tail sections (to take the arresting gear). Additionally, the Navy's tactical needs were so different that a common plane could be achieved only by limiting one service or the other on capabilities. The Navy . . . insisted that the TFX be no longer than fifty six feet, to fit the carrier elevators. This made for a short, relatively fat fuselage. But the Air Force fuselage had to be narrow and long . . . [Ref. 33, p. 180].

There were further Navy concerns about accommodating the large radar needed in the aircraft. McNamara's chief concern, however, was to see through his proposal; he apparently chose to interpret legitimate Navy concerns as an attempt to justify continued long term funding for large deck carriers.

With the decision to force service cooperation made, the only major decision left to McNamara was the one of whom to choose to produce the aircraft. Again, McNamara chose to overrule the recommendation of the uniformed military. Again, the issues were those of cost and perceived parochial Service interests.

The disagreement centered primarily on differing priorities. In evaluating the Boeing and General Dynamics proposals, the services focussed on the aircrafts' capabilities, an understandable concern given that both the Air Force and the Navy felt they were already sacrificing some capability merely by having to utilize a common airframe. Cost was a concern in their deliberations, but a secondary one. For McNamara, cost was the primary concern. This, too, is understandable given that the entire rationale for developing the TFX as a multi-service aircraft was that it would reduce overall defense expenditures.

The Boeing proposal recommended by the Source Selection Board incorporated several design features (made possible by new technological developments) that gave it, in the Services' eyes, an advantage over the General Dynamics proposal. Boeing proposed placing the engine inlet scoops above the wings to eliminate the danger of foreign object damage to the engines on take off and reduce the possibility that the unstable air generated by a missile launch would cause engine stall.<sup>13</sup> General Dynamics proposed mounting the engine inlets under the wings. Boeing proposed using thrust reversers for braking; General Dynamics would use conventional spoilers.

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<sup>13</sup>The missiles are mounted under the wings.



Boeing would utilize titanium in certain stress points on the aircraft; General Dynamics proposed using conventional aluminum and steel technology. Finally, the bid submitted by Boeing was lower: a total of 5,364.3 million dollars vice a General Dynamics bid of 5,455.5 million dollars. [Ref. 31, pp. 119-124]

The technological innovations that made the Boeing proposal so attractive to the military were what made it unattractive to McNamara. The problem of "cost optimism", the intentional underestimation of the research and development costs of new weapons systems by defense contractors, had plagued the military since World War II.<sup>14</sup> McNamara felt that both Boeing and the military were seriously underestimating the cost of developing the new, unproven technology Boeing had incorporated in its design proposal. The use of new materials such as titanium would entail not only substantial research and development costs, but would also require comparatively more testing, redesign and modification which could drive the cost of the TFX up even further. Moreover, the extensive use of new, unproven technology by Boeing was unnecessary. The concept of cost-effectiveness was predicated upon the use of realistic cost estimates to determine the most economical means of effectively meeting a strategic objective. By selecting the Boeing design, the military was proposing purchasing capabilities that, while nice to have, were not needed to meet the service missions of air superiority and fleet air defense; these missions could be filled by either of the two proposed aircraft.

Without reliable cost estimates and with no means of quantitatively measuring "superior performance", the choice between Boeing and General Dynamics rested upon individual judgement. One cannot fault McNamara for exercising his judgement and making the final decision: that was the prerogative of his office. One can and should, however, question the criteria upon which that judgement was based. Concluding that "the Air Force simply did not have an adequate system for estimating total program costs" [Ref. 31, p. 137] and that their cost estimates were unreliable, McNamara apparently relied upon little more than the ". . . rough judgements of the kind he had made for many years with the Ford Motor Co." [Ref. 31, p. 138]. In short, McNamara had a no more reliable method to determine by how much Boeing and General Dynamics had underbid than did the Air Force, and he apparently based his decision

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<sup>14</sup>This was due largely to contractor attempts to lock the government into agreements that could be adjusted upwards after weapons system production began. The military, too, gained from "cost optimism". Given limited service budgets, an optimistic cost estimate could make a prohibitively expensive new weapons system appear more affordable, and therefore more attractive to Congress. See [Ref. 31, p. 37].



that the Boeing estimate was the more unreliable of the two on little more than intuition. Testifying before a Congressional investigating committee, McNamara defended his decision with the rationale that:

Although the Source Selection Board and the two chiefs of the services recommended the selection of the Boeing aircraft, they did so because they placed a greater emphasis on bonus performance characteristics, and lesser emphasis on my second objective and third objective, a high degree of dependability and the lowest possible cost . . . both [aircraft] would for all practical purposes meet the military requirements . . . because in my opinion . . . the General Dynamics program offered greater . . . dependability and the lowest possible cost, I chose General dynamics as the source. (emphasis added) [Ref. 32, p. 28]

This was far from meeting Enthoven's standard that judgements on weapons systems " . . . be described in such a way that they can be subjected to checking, testing, criticism, debate . . . and possible refutation" [Ref. 29, p. 153]. The Senate subcommittee that convened to investigate McNamara's decision

. . . attempted throughout the hearings to find a credible rationale that would explain why the Secretaries had decided to buy the second best airplane at the higher price. The question, however, never was answered conclusively in a fashion that would allow an unequivocal determination to be made by the subcommittee . . . [Ref. 32, p. 17]

Though Charles Hitch commented that under McNamara " . . . the uniformed military have . . . been given a greater opportunity to influence the Department's programs than they ever had previously" [Ref. 30, p. 66], when McNamara felt that military priorities clashed with his own he simply rejected the military's judgement outright. This is all the more surprising in that McNamara had introduced a management system that ostensibly placed high value on the presentation of "alternatives". In the TFX case, McNamara did not even consult with the military before reaching his decision:

The civilian secretaries had not discussed the decision with their Air Force and Navy advisors, nor had they consulted with them about the factors given in the memorandum<sup>15</sup> for the record, until after the decision had been made and the document to justify it had been written. Then, late on the afternoon of November 23, the day before the public announcement, Secretary Zuckert<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>This memorandum detailed McNamara's objections to the Boeing proposal.

<sup>16</sup>Zuckert was then Secretary of the Air Force.

told General LeMay and General McKee of the decision, and when they protested, he informed them that it was irrevocable. [Ref. 32, p. 15]

The decision to award the TFX contract to General Dynamics proved politically embarrassing for McNamara, sparking two separate Congressional investigations. The program itself was a disaster. Testing of the F-111 (as the TFX was designated) showed the aircraft to have drag and stability problems as well as low maneuverability at high speeds and engine stall problems. Air Force specifications had called for a 200 mile supersonic dash capability; the F-111 had a dash capability of 30 miles. The goal of producing an aircraft suitable for both Air Force and Navy use never was realized. Structural weight increases (from a proposed weight of 38,804 pounds to 45,259 pounds within just one year of the contract award) rendered the F-111 unsuitable for carrier use. The Navy did not purchase a single production F-111, and ultimately developed the F-14 TOMCAT to replace the F-4. Most damning was the F-111's cost. General Dynamic's original estimate had called for a per-unit cost of 3.4 million dollars; by 1969 that cost had risen to 15.3 million dollars. [Ref. 32, pp. 54-66]

#### **D. THE MCNAMARA LEGACY**

Many of the innovations introduced by Robert McNamara have become institutionalized within the Department of Defense. The Defense Department formulates its budget proposals using the five year framework first introduced by PPBS, and systems analysis and cost-effectiveness studies are utilized extensively by the Services in the development of new weapons systems. If one judges the legacy of Robert McNamara and his aides against the standard of unifying the Services and ending perceived inter-Service rivalry through the consolidation of decision making power, however, then the McNamara era ended in failure.

The culprit (if one must be found) was overconfidence: overconfidence in the ability to quantify objectives and remove uncertainty, and overconfidence in the ability of "proper management" techniques to resolve what were very real and important disagreements over policy among the heads of the uniformed military Services. Hopes for the success of program budgeting were not tempered by a respect for its limitations, nor by a realization that administrative Service unification was a far cry from real unification. "The administrative fusion of the military services in the Department of Defense", wrote Colonel Robert Ginsburgh in 1964, "has not been accompanied by a fusion of their corporate loyalties, which remain attached to the individual services"

[Ref. 34, p. 257]. The question which remains unanswered is whether there should even be a unification of the Services.

The role of adversarial politics in government (akin to the notion that competition breeds success) has long been accepted by most Americans. Indeed, the open airing of honest differences among dedicated and well-meaning individuals lies at the root of the American governmental system of checks and balances. As applied to defense, however, adversarial politics have come to be regarded as unseemly. Given the importance of their charge (the defense of the country), the uniformed men in the defense establishment should somehow be above such things as arguments over individual Service funding levels. When disagreement does exist within the defense establishment, it is seen not as honest concern over service roles but as "parochialism" or "interService rivalry". What goes unrecognized by proponents of Defense reorganization, however, is that without clear, unambiguous long-term national objectives, disagreements among dedicated men over service roles will exist, and regardless of defense organizational structure, these national objectives are unlikely to be set by a President who operates within a pluralistic, adversarial governmental structure that operates through conciliation and compromise.

Nevertheless, attention continued to focus upon the need to legislate cooperation within the Defense Department organization. The Rockefeller Committee on Defense Department Reorganization reported in 1953 that "it was not expected in 1947 when the National Security Act was adopted, or in 1949 when it was amended, that the national security organization should be closed to further improvement" [Ref. 35, p. 2]. During the Reagan administration, public attention would again be focused upon how the allocation of funds among the individual Services reflected U.S. national objectives. Internal service declaratory strategies would be seen by some (as they had during the McNamara era) not as frameworks for strategic thought, but simply as disjointed service justifications for a larger share of the defense budget. The call for Defense reform would begin anew.



## V. THE PHOENIX EFFECT: THE REEMERGENCE OF THE ISSUES

In the years following Defense Secretary Robert McNamara's failed attempt to unify the services and end parochial inter-service rivalry through the centralization of Defense decision-making power, the administration of the Services became increasingly de-centralized. The Planning, Programming and Budgeting System was retained by the Defense Department, but each of the Services tailored the system to suit their own particular Service needs [Ref. 36, p. 141]. In the aftermath of the Vietnam War, public debate continued over what constituted appropriate funding levels for each of the Services and how these levels were set by the Administration, debate which was heightened during the recession-plagued years of the Carter Administration. Perceived inconsistencies in the Carter Administration's national military strategy and the failed military attempt to rescue the Iranian Embassy hostages served to further fuel public concern over joint Service coordination and planning.

President Ronald Reagan took office in 1981 promising to rebuild what he saw as an underfunded military that had suffered increasing neglect in the years following the Vietnam War. His stated goal of a 600-ship Navy, centered around 15 carrier battle groups, was publicly championed by his newly appointed Secretary of the Navy John Lehman. Lehman publicly linked the goal of a 600-ship Navy to a national maritime strategy that he cited as "a major change in strategy" [Ref. 37, p. 13], a change from a "low-threat, pulled back" strategy to one which emphasized a forward defense posture which would carry the fight to the enemy should deterrence fail [Ref. 38, p. 18]. The Maritime Strategy was touted by Lehman as

. . . a coherent intellectual framework for the allocations of scarcities and the resources we have, to provide a logical system to make the right kind of choices of how to train people, how to equip them, what kind of systems to buy . . . something . . . which we have never had since World War II. [Ref. 39, p. 85]

Ironically, Lehman's very success in publicizing the Maritime Strategy and achieving his goal of a 600-ship Navy helped to further the cause of Congressional proponents of Department of Defense (DOD) organizational reform. For many, the Maritime Strategy came to be linked less with the Navy than with John Lehman (an ardent DOD reform opponent). For the proponents of Defense reform, the Maritime



Strategy was seen not as an element of a coherent national strategy, but rather as further evidence of continuing Navy parochialism, a strategy " driven more by competition over constrained defense resources than by clearheaded strategic analysis" [Ref. 3, p. 33]. The Navy's success in developing a strategy that incorporated its air, surface, and subsurface warfare components into a global strategic framework was cited as evidence of the inability of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) to do the same on a national level, and thus was evidence of the need for JCS reform:

. . . the JCS and the Joint Staff have not been an effective force in strategy planning. The reason is that the individual Services dominate the joint process. Today the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps vie with each other for the resources necessary to carry out their own Service-oriented strategies . . . the Navy has pressed for a Maritime Strategy, while the Army has put forward a Continentalist approach in which its forces would play a more effective role. Both compete for the Air Force's strategic air power interests. The prize is the resources that would allow them to shape forces in molds of their own individual making. [Ref. 3, p. 41]

The misperceptions surrounding the Maritime Strategy - the misinterpretations of its origins, its purpose, and the confusion of the Maritime Strategy with operational war plans - have risen due both to the manner in which the Strategy was publicized by the Navy, and to the prejudices and preconceptions of the proponents of DOD reform. An examination of how a strategy that the Navy developed as a framework for strategic thought (something which Congress itself has claimed the Navy was lacking) came to be used in Congress as evidence of the need for DOD reform provides an interesting perspective on the politics of Defense reorganization.

#### **A. THE MARITIME STRATEGY**

The Maritime Strategy has come to be closely linked, both in the press and in Congress, with Navy Secretary John Lehman and his goal of a 600-ship Navy. The major precepts of the Maritime Strategy (its emphasis on a global perspective, forward deployment, and the need for an allied coalition to carry the war at sea to the enemy's homeland should deterrence fail), however, are based upon long-held assumptions which have driven Navy force structure planning since at least the late 1940's. Shortly after World War II, Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz wrote that offensive operations were crucial to the successful prosecution of war at sea, even in a defensive war:

. . . the Navy should be used in the initial stages of such a war to project its weapons against vital enemy targets on land, the reduction of which is the basic

objective of warfare . . . it is the function of the Navy to carry the war to the enemy so that it will not be fought on United States soil. [Ref. 40, p. 536]

The premise that the U.S. Navy's force structure should be developed around the twin pillars of strategic deterrence and power projection ashore, the ability to conduct offensive rather than strictly defensive operations, is not new but rather is a recurring theme echoed time and again by the Navy's uniformed leadership. It is a theme found both in the Navy's professional literature<sup>17</sup> and in more widely accessible publications such as *Foreign Affairs*:

Today, the US Navy's force structure and capabilities enable it to perform in: (1) strategic deterrence; (2) naval presence; (3) sea control (assertion and denial); and (4) projection of power ashore . . . . There can and should be reasonable debate on naval force structure. It should be a three step process. Step one is to size up our naval strategic deterrence forces on the basis of what constitutes a credible deterrent . . . . Step two is to size up our forces for the projection of power on the basis of our overseas interests and commitments . . . step three . . . is to assess the naval balance in the areas of naval presence and sea control . . . . (Ref. 41, pp. 343-353)

The basic strategic assumptions that naval force structure planning must be based upon the global projection of power on the enemy's homeland, and that the successful prosecution of such a forward strategy would require a peacetime Navy that included fifteen carrier battle groups, were made explicit to Congress as early as 1970. During joint Senate-House Armed Services Committee hearings on the CVA-70 nuclear aircraft carrier, then Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Thomas Moorer testified:

The Fundamental matters on which you must make a judgement are far wider and of deeper significance than whether or not the Navy should be authorized to proceed with the construction of this third Nimitz class nuclear carrier.

In my view the basic issue extends to the overall role that the Navy does now . . . . In this respect it necessarily involves in a very real sense the entire forward defense posture, which is the undergirding concept of our national defense strategy. [Ref. 42. p. 15]

That this strategy was linked to a force structure of 15 carrier battle groups was emphasized to the Committee by Rear Admiral Holloway:

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<sup>17</sup>Articles stressing the necessity of a coalition maritime strategy based on conducting offensive operations in wartime to protect NATO's northern flank appeared in 1969 in the *Naval War College Review*.

This Nation's military strategy is predicated on a forward posture, with critical reliance placed on our overseas allies and our forward deployed forces . . . .

The final decision made by the Secretary of Defense, after consideration of all factors, including budgetary constraints, was that an approved force level of 15 CVAs in fiscal year 1970 was sufficient to accomplish the objectives of the strategic concept with a degree of risk considered acceptable. [Ref. 42, pp. 9, 26]

Neither the basic concepts of the Maritime Strategy, then, nor their link to a 15 carrier Navy were new when Secretary Lehman took office in 1981. What was new was the receptiveness shown these concepts by the new Administration. In 1978 the Navy had attempted to codify these assumptions of the Navy's role (assumptions that were implicit to Naval strategic thought and force planning) in the force planning document Sea Plan 2000. This document was rejected by the Carter administration, which had decided to place its defensive military emphasis on the ground forces of the NATO central front at the expense of naval ship construction [Ref. 43, p.137].

With the election of Ronald Reagan, who had campaigned on a platform emphasizing the need for increased defense spending for all of the Services, Naval force planning received a new impetus. The force planning assumptions codified in Sea Plan 2000, assumptions which were publically delineated in 1979 by Admiral Thomas Hayward [Ref. 44], were re-packaged and publically presented in 1983 as the U.S. Navy's Maritime Strategy, a strategy " . . . firmly set in the context of national strategy, emphasizing coalition warfare and the criticality of allies, and demanding cooperation with our sister services", a strategy reflecting a national strategy " . . . built on three pillars: deterrence, forward defense, and alliance solidarity" [Ref. 38, p. 4].

## **B. THE SELLING OF STRATEGY**

The Maritime Strategy publically codified, in one document, implicit Navy assumptions on the role of naval forces in a global war and the underlying assumptions behind the Navy's force structure planning policies, placing these assumptions in a national strategic perspective. As such, it served several purposes, both for the uniformed Navy and for Secretary Lehman. For the uniformed Navy, the Maritime Strategy was intended "to promote discussion inside and outside of the naval profession" [Ref. 45, p. 84]. In an attempt to provide a baseline framework in which surface, subsurface, and aviation sailors could see their roles in a unified context, the Strategy summarized " . . . the best collective professional judgement of the senior uniformed and civilian naval leadership of how to employ maritime forces to deter war or - should war come - to meet U.S. objectives" [Ref. 45, p. 84].



For Navy Secretary John Lehman (and his Navy representatives in Congressional appropriations hearings), the Maritime Strategy provided a framework within which he could justify his budget requests to Congress. The Maritime Strategy was used to show that, unlike the requests of previous administrations, the enormous military budget increases sought by the Reagan Administration were based upon the requirements of a coherent, long range national defense strategy of which the Maritime Strategy was a component. The Reagan proposal to fund a 600-ship Navy was

. . . not based on 'by guess and by golly', but is an outgrowth of having a dynamic strategy. The Maritime Strategy is a framework from which our whole budget, exercises, and operations are developing. . . it is the first time we laid it all out in one document - in writing - and then started to use it as a total framework for our efforts, from POM [Program Objective Memorandum] process to war games . . . that is why we published an unclassified version of the Maritime Strategy in the Naval Institute's Proceedings. Since we were accused of not really having a strategy, it seemed prudent to show our critics that we do have a strategy. [Ref. 46, p. 9]

Lehman's very success in achieving his goal of a 600-ship Navy and linking it to the Maritime Strategy, however, led to a public association of the Maritime Strategy not so much with the Navy as with Lehman himself. A large part of this association arose from the manner in which the Strategy was presented and publicized.

The Maritime Strategy was publicized as the driving force behind all aspects of Navy Department operations and administration:

. . . our maritime strategy gives coherence and direction to how we allocate money among competing types of ships, different accounts for spare parts, missile systems, and defense planning. It provides guidelines to aid us in allocating both resources and shortages . . . (it) provides us with a framework within which to train our forces. [Ref. 47, p. 108]

Lehman presented the Maritime Strategy not as the outgrowth of an ongoing process of naval strategic thought, however, not as the codification of long held Navy force planning assumptions, but rather as a dramatic break with the past, "a major change in naval strategy" [Ref. 37, p. 13]. It was a coherent framework that was a departure from the "basically inconsistent" naval shipbuilding strategies of the previous decade [Ref. 43, p. 140]. The Maritime Strategy was derived from the national strategy of President Ronald Reagan; it was the binding force behind a 600-ship Navy that was the goal of the Reagan Administration when it took office, and that Administration was represented in the Navy by John Lehman:



. . . the number (of 600 ships) was not plucked out of a hat, nor derived from some mathematical formula . . . . The national strategy is decided by the President of the United States . . . we have derived our maritime strategy from that national strategy . . . (and) the force structure, the number of ships, units, facilities and aircraft necessary to carry out that strategy, the 600 ships, if you will. . . . so to summarize, Mr. Chairman, we have a 600-ship Navy objective that is being achieved. It is derived with very rigorous logic from the naval tasks provided to us by our national defense strategy, which is decided by the President of the United States and which is based on our vital interests around the world. [Ref. 47, pp. 13, 87]

Further linking the Maritime Strategy in the public mind to Secretary Lehman was the fact that the Strategy was championed by Lehman himself. Previously, strategy had been seen by most as something to be discussed by the uniformed Navy. In pleading the case for a third Nimitz-class carrier before the joint Senate - House Armed Services Committee in 1970, then Navy Secretary John Chafee stated:

I would like to make it clear that I support this carrier . . . . This new carrier is not associated with particular force levels. It is needed to handle our modern aircraft, and it is needed to give the so-called long legs and mobility that is needed in the modern era. [Ref. 42, p. 4]

It was then left to Admirals Moorer and Holloway to explain the strategy upon which the request was based. When Secretary Lehman publicized the Maritime Strategy himself, supported by the admirals, it was a break with tradition that created the impression that Lehman himself had played a large role in the Strategy's authorship.<sup>18</sup> This linkage of the Maritime Strategy with the political agenda of Secretary Lehman would result in misperceptions about and criticism of the Strategy by Defense reformers when Lehman publically opposed what would become the Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986.

### C. THE POLITICS OF STRATEGY

The Reagan Administration's success in gaining legislative approval to increase the size of the Navy from approximately 450 to 600 ships caused concern in some quarters of Congress as to whether the Administration's military budget allocations

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<sup>18</sup>This point was not lost on Lehman's Congressional critics. Lehman was criticized for his perceived role in developing the Maritime Strategy on the floor of the House of Representatives by Congressman McCurdy: ". . . it is clear in all these debates that we have seen that the service Secretaries have not always been playing on even fields. We have a Navy Secretary who has established a very strong office. He is now involved with strategy". [Ref. 1, p. H10423]

were unduly favoring the Navy at the expense of the Army's ground forces strength in Europe. Congress was growing increasingly exasperated over the perceived inability of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to present unified military advice to the President and "transcend service interests" when it came to budgetary allocation questions [Ref. 1, p. H10392]. The terrorist attack which killed 241 Marines at the Beirut Airport and the perception of "poor interservice cooperation" in the Grenada invasion further fueled concern over the effectiveness of the JCS organizational structure in developing joint operational plans and strategies [Ref. 1, p. H10392].

● Congress began holding hearings in 1982 to examine ways to increase efficiency within the JCS organization by amending Title 10 of the U.S. Code. Based upon the testimony of several former Defense Secretaries and former JCS members, Congress proposed strengthening the JCS organization by increasing the power of the JCS Chairman, giving him power that would in effect make him a military chief of staff (similar to the proposals that had been favored by Presidents Truman and Eisenhower). The proposal worked out by Congressional committees would designate the Chairman as the "principal military advisor to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense" [Ref. 1, p. H10392]. This fundamental change to the JCS Chairman's role was seen by reform proponents as a necessary step to end what they saw as inter-Service rivalry. It would in effect give the JCS Chairman a voice independent of the pressures of the Service Chiefs. Rather than seeking consensus among the Service Chiefs as in the past, as the principal advisor to the President on defense matters the Chairman would be free to take whatever position he saw fit. The Chairman could, in effect, overrule the Service Chief's opinions on a matter and make the "difficult choices" that were required to "deal effectively with fundamental military issues" such as budgetary priorities [Ref. 1, p. H10394]. The Congressional committee decided that the JCS Chairman needed the power to ". . . integrate the recommendations of the unified and specified commanders, establish priorities, and provide civilian authorities a coherent set of combatant command proposals" [Ref. 1, p. H10393].

The proposed changes would be a dramatic departure from the then current operating procedures of the JCS, which many in Congress saw as fundamentally flawed:

. . . the JCS frequently acts as a negotiating forum in which each service seeks to maximize its position through bargaining . . . the JCS is a group that arrives at

its positions either by dividing along the lines of the competing interests or negotiating a mutually acceptable consensus in which each member supports the claims of the others. [Ref. 1, p. II10392]

Other major provisions of what became known as the "Goldwater - Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986":

- required the JCS Chairman to review Service budget proposals and advise the Secretary of Defense as to their impact on the unified and specified commands
- created the position of Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who would outrank all other military officers other than the JCS Chairman and serve as acting JCS Chairman in the Chairman's absence
- established the chain of command for the unified and specified commands as running directly from the President to the Secretary of Defense to the unified and specified commanders
- gave the unified and specified commanders veto authority over the selection of their subordinate commanders
- required the President to submit an annual report to Congress on the national security strategy of the United States
- established joint duty service as a requirement of all officers prior to promotion to flag rank. [Ref. 2]

In the Congressional hearings conducted on the proposals for DOD reorganization, one of the most vocal opponents of the proposed reforms was Navy Secretary Lehman. Lehman's criticism of the proposed reforms addressed the basic issue of Defense reorganization, that of the utility of competition in providing a system of checks and balances. Lehman testified before the House Armed Services Committee that the "outworn and bankrupt theory of centralization and bureaucratic solution" [Ref. 3, p. 193] (the underlying premise of attempts to legislate Service cooperation) would only result in the "overbureaucratization" [Ref. 5, p. 193] of the military:

I have difficulty understanding the complaints by many who propose reform that the JCS cannot reach agreement and that the papers they all sign end up being the lowest common denominator. That is exactly as it should be. A Secretary of Defense and a President ought to demand disagreement. How can there not be disagreement over approaches to the greatest issues of war and peace in a democracy . . . . If we allow the proposals . . . to bring all of the CINCs into a subordinate position under a unified Chairman who then transmits upward and downward, and translates to the civilian authority,<sup>19</sup> then we have removed from civilian authority any decision making and choice-making on these essential functions . . . . The picture you see here in Congress is grotesquely distorted,

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<sup>19</sup> Lehman was referring to the proposal that the JCS Chairman review Service budget requests to determine their impact on the unified and specified commands.



with the interservice rivalry dimension blown all out of proportion to what is really going on. Yes, there has to be a very strong unifying grip on the Pentagon, and I submit that the Secretary of Defense is providing that today. Institutionally, that is where the grip should be and not in a uniformed officer's hands. [Ref. 3, pp. 195-198].

Lehman argued that the centralization of decision-making power in the JCS would increase efficiency, but at the price of reducing the options presented to the President. For the proponents of Defense reform, however, Lehman's arguments were simply a continuation of a Navy tradition of fighting to retain power at all costs. Navy arguments for Service autonomy were seen as motivated less by concerns over the proper allocation of decision-making power than by selfish Navy parochialism:

Part of the reason for the tension between the joint arena and service interests is historical. Prior to World War II, the Navy was the dominant Service . . . . The heated debates in 1946, over proposals to unify the nation's defense responsibilities, foreshadowed today's problems. The Navy saw no reason then to surrender the power it had accrued and is just as reluctant to do so today . . . . The Navy has repeatedly objected to any provision that would weaken their ability to control their own budget, or retain their air or land arms. Today the Navy prefers "de-organization" to reorganization for the same reasons. But the Navy is ignoring the glaring inadequacies of our joint system - inadequacies that largely result from perpetuating the imbalance between the separate services and the joint system . . . . [Ref. 3, p. 33]

Just as Secretary Lehman's opinions on the merits of healthy inter-Service competition were seen as motivated by parochial Navy self interests, so too the Maritime Strategy which had come to be associated with Lehman was misinterpreted as simply a Navy oriented strategy designed to justify what was seen as the Navy's inordinate share of the military budget. To reform proponents, the Maritime Strategy was not a component of a national defense strategy, a strategy which was a complement to the strategies of the other Services, but rather the Maritime Strategy was in direct competition with those of the other Services, and "the taxpayers cannot afford to fund three different national military strategies"<sup>20</sup> [Ref. 1, p. H10415].

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<sup>20</sup>The question of how well the various "service strategies" complement each other is a specious one in that the three service strategies most commonly cited (the Navy's Maritime Strategy, the Air Force's Air-Land 2000 and the Army's Field Manual 100-5) are not constructed in such a way as to allow for direct comparison. The Maritime Strategy focuses on the employment of naval forces in a global war and examines the Navy's military role from a global, scenario dependent perspective. In Field Manual 100-5, however, "the Army's air-land battle intentionally avoids strategic



The extent to which the Maritime Strategy was misinterpreted by those proponents of Defense reform eager to support their accusations of Navy parochialism is most clearly illustrated by their confusion of the Strategy with operational war plans. In explaining the Maritime Strategy to Congress and the public, both Lehman and the Navy's uniformed leadership were careful to stress that the Maritime Strategy was not an operational war plan or a battlefield prescription:

It is important to understand the levels of analysis we are talking about when we say 'strategy'. Strategy has different meanings when applied to different levels of discourse. When we deal with the maritime strategy that the Chief of Naval Operations, the Commandant and I carry out for the Secretary of Defense, we are speaking about the most intelligent application of Navy and Marine Corps force structure to accomplish the overall national strategy. We do not fight the battles; we do not pick the times and places of deployments. We provide the resources and the trained and modernized forces for the theater commanders . . . to apply their war-fighting strategies. All too often, this confusion is rampant in the literature from the 'Beltway Bandits' and the think tanks, and the armchair strategists in confusing the one with the other . . . . The system is currently set up for the unified and specified commanders to fight the actual wars. They report directly to the Secretary of Defense and that is how we derive the maritime options for carrying out the national strategy. [Ref. 47, p. 26]

This and numerous other similar explanations were conveniently overlooked by critics in the press and in Congress. In articles in the press, the Maritime Strategy was explained to the public not as an intellectual baseline framework for strategic thought, but as the Navy's "war plans" and "the Navy's plan for victory in Europe" [Ref. 49, pp. 40-41]. This public confusion carried over into the Congressional hearings on DOD reform by proponents of JCS reform (who presumably should have known better), who cited the Maritime Strategy as an example of the failure of the JCS organizational structure to formulate joint war plans. A former director of the Heritage Foundation Defense Assessment Project testified:

Service parochialism is as ubiquitous as it is legendary, and the Services, which the Chiefs individually represent, cooperate only grudgingly . . . . The current approach to strategy formulation is a prime example of this difficulty . . . . Beyond the goal of deterring nuclear war, the Navy has pressed for a Maritime Strategy, while the Army has put forward a Continentalist approach in which its forces would play a more central role . . . . This situation is unsatisfactory. American military strategies must be based on an evaluation of the nation's

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issues, and instead focuses on the operational problems associated with winning an air-land campaign for a generic theater commander" [Ref. 48, p. 26].

interests and objectives - and the threat to those interests and objectives. Military strategy formulation should be handled by the Joint Staff, in coordination with the commanders of the combatant commands (CINCs) and Services. Subordinate operational plans should be developed by the CINCs and approved by the JCS. Only then can decisions be made about the force structures - the way the Services organize to fight. [Ref. 3, pp. 41-42]

Despite the fact that the Maritime Strategy is not an operational war plan, and was not designed as a budgetary counterweight to the Army's "continentalist strategy",<sup>21</sup> the type of flawed rhetoric cited above gradually achieved the status of a truism. It was repeatedly cited on the floor of Congress by reform proponents eager to support their contention that Navy objections to the Goldwater - Nichols Act were based less upon concerns for the welfare of the country than upon a desire to preserve Navy power and protect parochial Navy self-interests.

#### D. THE DRIVE FOR FURTHER REFORM

It is probably true that the misperceptions about the Maritime Strategy contributed only superficially to the passage of the Goldwater - Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act on October 1, 1986. Yet, the continuing misinterpretation of the Strategy, and the manner in which it was used to further the cause of reorganization, reveals much about the politics of Defense reform.

Every Congressional attempt to legislate inter-Service cooperation by centralizing Defense decision-making power in the hands of a uniformed Chief of Staff since World War II has been opposed by the Navy. Navy concerns have centered on the contention that only through a competitive process (the cornerstone of the American political system of checks and balances) can all Defense viewpoints and options be fully aired and considered, and an overcentralization of power would only serve to reduce the options available to civilian authority. Ironically, over the past four decades these concerns have come to be seen as "parochialism" and "self-interest", legitimate Navy concerns themselves seen as evidence of the need for reform. Congressional reformers charge that the de-centralized force planning system traditionally favored by the Navy, a system which favors negotiation among competing interests to gain consensus, is dangerous to the security of the country. A point which has gone unaddressed by these critics is why such a system is any more dangerous than a Congressional budget appropriations process which functions this very same way.

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<sup>21</sup>A point addressed in [Ref. 50].

The Maritime Strategy has become in many respects a victim of its authors' ambitions. That it is intended to be so many things - an impetus for strategic thought, a framework for force structure and training, a guideline for the employment of naval forces - has perhaps contributed to its being interpreted in ways best suited to the needs and preconceptions of the interpreter. Being so closely tied in the public mind to a Navy Secretary who opposed Defense reform, the Maritime Strategy was interpreted by reform proponents as simply a justification for the funding of an offensive Navy posture dear to parochial Navy interests. Whether the Maritime Strategy will prove resilient and flexible enough to survive as a vehicle for strategic thought after the Reagan Administration has left office remains to be seen.

## VI. THE LATEST RESOLUTION: THE GOLDWATER - NICHOLS ACT

Given the deluge of post-mortems that have attempted to fix blame for the perceived failures of the military to coordinate operations during the Vietnam conflict, coupled with the attention given to the supposed incompatibilities of the individual Service strategies that have driven procurement during the Reagan Administration, it was perhaps inevitable that Congress should once again focus its attention upon reforming the Defense Department organizational structure. Further impetus to the drive for reform that began in the early 1980s was provided by the terrorist attack on the Marine forces in Lebanon, the failure of the Iran hostage rescue mission, and the reported coordination difficulties between Army and Navy units in Grenada. "These failures," noted a staff report to the Senate Armed Services Committee, "dramatically illustrate the inadequate attention paid to the conduct of joint operations. The fault rests both with the Army and the Navy" [Ref. 51, p. 367]. These "dramatic illustrations" of the weaknesses of the Defense planning system have been cited repeatedly before Congressional committees by critics who have argued for structural reform of the defense organization. In the words of former Defense Secretary James Schlesinger:

. . . in the absence of structural reform . . . I feel that the United States will obtain neither the best military advice, nor the effective execution of military plans, nor the provision of military capabilities commensurate with the fiscal resources provided, nor the most advantageous deterrence and defense posture available to the nation. [Ref. 51, p. III]

While the evidence of defense organizational weaknesses cited by reform proponents was new, however, the basic issues were not. The hearings on defense reorganization conducted by both the House and the Senate centered upon the now familiar issue of the tension between Service autonomy and military unification. With its focus once again upon the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Congress had come full circle in its efforts to centralize defense decision-making power. In 1947, Congress had focused upon the power and role of the JCS; in 1958, upon the role of the Secretary of Defense; now, Congress was once again dealing with the issue of dissent among the Joint Chiefs.



The issues raised in the latest Congressional debates over the merits of establishing a single Chief of Staff to end perceived Service parochialism are strikingly similar to those raised in 1949 and 1958. Again, the inability of the Service Chiefs to transcend the interests of their own Services for the good of the nation as a whole was cited as evidence of the need for reform. The issue of the inherent weaknesses in the system of coordinating policies by committee was raised in the 1949 hearings:

Interservice rivalries indicate a lack of understanding of the fact that military security depends upon cooperation and balance among the Army, Navy, and Air Force, and upon the creation of a genuinely unified military arm . . . . Some part of these weaknesses undoubtedly can be traced to the newness of the organization, but this Commission believes that they show serious organizational defects. For another thing, they (the JCS) appear to be too deeply immersed in the point of view of their particular services. Since they occupy dual roles - they are heads of separate services as well as members of the Joint Chiefs - they must, perforce, be advocates. [Ref. 52, pp. 6, 26]

These same weaknesses were cited again in 1958:

SENATOR STEVENS. Well, just as a practical matter here when I first came on the committee we heard something said about something having been approved by the Joint Chiefs. That had a certain meaning to me then, and it does not have that meaning now, because we have been told many times that there is never any vote taken. I do not see how you reach decisions, unless you imagine that there is never any disagreement among them about various matters. We hear all the time about disagreement among the services . . . . [Ref. 53, p. 38]

Earlier attempts to correct these structural weaknesses in the JCS organization, however, were seen by the 1980s as having failed to solve the problem of the conflict between Service interests and the national interest:

. . . particularly with regard to issues that involve service interests, the advice of the JCS as a corporate body at present is often inadequate. The joint military system is slow to develop formal military positions. As a result, JCS advice often is not available when needed. When formal advice is finally rendered, its form and substance has been so diluted by the joint staffing process, which in effect gives each service a veto on every word, that it is of little use to civilian leaders. The issues on which the Joint Chiefs of Staff allegedly stumbles relate to cross-service decisions, such as those concerning resource allocation, roles and missions, unified and specified command structure and functioning, joint doctrine and joint training. [Ref. 54, pp. 5, 9]

- Congress was determined to end these problems with the Goldwater - Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. As summarized earlier, the Act makes significant changes to the organizational structure of the Department of Defense, particularly the Joint Chiefs of Staff structure as delineated in Title 10 of the United States Code. As stated by Senator Sam Nunn:

These changes are designed to correct problems that have been evident in the Department of Defense for many years. These problems include lack of interservice cooperation, poor quality of collective advice from the Joint Chiefs, cumbersome chains of command, inadequate authority of the war-fighting commanders in the field and excessive bureaucracy at every level. [Ref. 55, p. S12653]

Assessing the impact of, the Goldwater - Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 is difficult in that many of the mandated changes are only now being implemented. By assessing the most potentially far-reaching changes of the Act (those affecting the roles of the Unified and Specified commanders, the changes to joint duty requirements and the role of the Joint Staff, and the redistribution of authority within the JCS organization) in the light of historical experience and current reality, however, one should gain some insight as to the probable effectiveness of the changes in increasing efficiency and ending Service rivalry.

#### **A. THE UNIFIED AND SPECIFIED COMMANDS**

- While some provisions of the Goldwater - Nichols Act are designed to clarify the chain of command of the Unified and Specified commanders [Ref. 2, sec. 163 (a)(1)], the majority of the changes in the Unified and Specified command structure mandated by the Act are designed to increase the input of the commanders into the process of developing budgetary and force structure priorities. This input, it is hoped, will help to redirect funding into vital areas traditionally ignored by the individual Services (such as airlift and sealift). The changes are designed to alleviate a situation where:

The authority of the unified combatant commanders remains extremely limited. They have weak authority over their service component commands; limited influence over resources, personnel and joint training; and little ability to promote greater unification within their commands. As a result, the unified combatant commands remain loose confederations of single-service forces which are often unable to provide effective unified action across the spectrum of military missions. [Ref. 56, p. S5463]

To correct this, the 1986 Act designates the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as "the spokesman for the commanders of the combatant commands, especially on the operational requirements of their commands". It directs the Chairman to "confer with and obtain information from the commanders of the combatant commands with respect to the requirements of their commands," to "evaluate and integrate such information," and to "advise and make recommendations to the Secretary of Defense with respect to the requirements of the combatant commands, individually and collectively". [Ref. 2, sec. 163]

The Act further provides that the Defense Secretary periodically review the budgets of the Unified and Specified commands "for those aspects of administration and support" necessary for the commanders to meet their missions [Ref. 2, sec. 164(b)], and to include in the annual Defense budget submitted to Congress a separate budget for each of the Unified and Specified commands to include "funding proposals for such activities of the combatant command(s) as the Secretary . . . determines to be appropriate for inclusion" [Ref. 2, sec. 166].

While Congressional motives for making these changes (the desire to increase efficiency in the allocation of resources) are certainly laudable, their effectiveness in altering the budget prioritization process within the Defense Department is likely to be mixed at best. The Act may certainly increase the efficiency by which funding for areas such as training is allocated for the individual components within a Unified or Specified command, but the competition for the allocation of funds between these commands gives rise to questions that must still be resolved as they are today, by the office of the Secretary of Defense and the individual Service administrative departments. Congressional expectations that because of this Act the Unified and Specified commanders will have a greater say in the distribution of funds between combat and support elements are likely to remain unfulfilled because the Act does not address the complexities of a Programming, Planning and Budgeting system that operates on a five-year budgetary cycle and has been tailored by each of the Services to suit individual Service needs (see Ref. 36). The Unified and Specified commanders simply do not have the staffing necessary to become deeply involved in the weapons systems acquisition process. Even if they did, there is little evidence to suggest that they would be any more likely to divert scarce funds from firepower to support and logistics assets than are the individual Service Chiefs. As for expectations that increased Unified and Specified command input into the budgetary process will result in a greater command



ability to deal with "low-level" contingencies, these, too, likely to remain unfulfilled because the Unified commanders, like the individual Services, orient their planning towards "worst case" rather than "most likely" scenarios.

The effectiveness of the 1986 Act in achieving the goal of promoting greater efficiency in the allocation of resources between the Unified and Specified commands is further limited in that the framers of the Act have seemingly ignored the Congressional inputs into the defense budgetary process. Increasing the efficiency of the Defense Department is not as simple a matter as merely eliminating perceived inter-Service rivalry, establishing priorities, and developing a coherent set of budget proposals. Any such budget, no matter how coherent or well thought out, must be approved by a Congress which can disapprove or alter budget proposals as it sees fit. It has been estimated that 16 House and 19 Senate committees and an even larger number of subcommittees have an interest in either defense or (broadly defined) national security policy development and implementation [Ref. 57, p. 34]. Each of these committees are composed of legislators with constituencies to satisfy:

In dealing with defense matters, Congressmen and Senators attempt to appeal to constituents in two contradictory ways. On the one hand, lawmakers are understandably strong supporters of programs or installations that contribute to jobs in their states or districts. Thus, while they may rail about defense spending in general . . . legislators seldom oppose programs at home, no matter how wasteful they may be. [Ref. 58, p. 37]

That Service parochialism is less a cause of waste in the Defense Department than it is a convenient scapegoat for Congress, and that the Goldwater - Nichols Act would therefore be of limited utility in combating waste even if it did end Service rivalry, was noted in 1985 by Representative Ronald Dellums:

. . . I find fault with the argument that this bill is meant to reduce the incident of redundant weapons systems which is supposed . . . to have come from this interservice rivalry . . . . I submit that the ultimate responsibility for the massive duplications in weapons systems rests with the authorizing and appropriating committees of Congress . . . . Without our approval . . . the systems would never be funded, JCS rivalry notwithstanding. [Ref. 54, p. 35]

## **B. JOINT DUTY ASSIGNMENTS AND THE JOINT STAFF**

A second area of major change mandated by the Goldwater - Nichols Act concerns joint duty assignments for military officers and the role of the Joint Staff. Congress perceived the system by which the Services (particularly the Navy) selected

and assigned officers to joint duty billets to be seriously flawed. Service tendencies to retain their best officers for duty within their own Services, the tendency to send only mediocre performers to joint assignments, are seen by Congress as largely to blame for the perceived mediocrity of Joint Staff products. This system has resulted in the creation of a Joint Staff, Congress argued, characterized by:

. . . the inadequate quality of joint duty military personnel. While joint military organizations have the most important planning and operational responsibilities, military officers perceive substantial disincentives to serving in such assignments outside their service. In addition, the Department of Defense has given insignificant attention to developing officers with joint duty skills. For the most part, military officers do not want to be assigned to joint duty; are pressured or monitored for loyalty by their services while serving in joint assignments; are not prepared either by education or experience to perform their joint duties; and serve for only a relatively short period once they have learned their jobs. This is an intolerable situation. [Ref. 56, p. S5465]

To correct these perceived deficiencies, Congress has incorporated into the Golwater - Nichols Act the provision that "an officer may not be selected for promotion to the grade of brigadier general or rear admiral (lower half) unless the officer has served in a joint duty assignment" [Ref. 2, sec. 404]. The Secretary of Defense must designate which officer billets qualify as joint duty assignments, and the assignment of an officer to a joint duty billet must be for a term of "not less than three and one half years" (unless specifically waived) [Ref. 2, sec. 664]. The Defense Secretary must also monitor the promotion of officers having served in joint duty assignments to ensure that selection boards "give appropriate consideration to the performance of officers in joint duty assignments" (presumably to prevent retaliation by the Services against those who fail to exhibit proper Service loyalty) [Ref. 2, sec. 402].

Further provisions of the Act change the role of the Joint Staff itself. Instead of working for the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a corporate body, the Joint Staff is now to work solely for the Chairman; the Secretary of Defense must ensure that the Joint Staff is "independently organized and operated" [Ref. 2, sec. 155(d)]. Rather than being tied to the Joint Chiefs as a whole (the independent, "parochial" members of which could presumably exert undue influence over subordinates), the Act carefully stipulates that "the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff manages the Joint Staff and the Director of the Joint Staff. The Joint Staff shall perform such duties as the Chairman prescribes and shall perform such duties under such procedures as the Chairman directs" [Ref. 2, sec. 155(c)].

If, indeed, the perceived deficiencies of jointly produced staff products are the result of Service reluctance to assign the best officers to joint duty (a charge to which the Navy in particular is generally regarded as guilty), then the provisions of the 1986 Act should generally prove successful. The major problem will be one of implementation. Care must be exercised to ensure that only truly meaningful assignments are designated as satisfying the joint duty requirement (a Marine officer assigned as transportation officer on an Air Force base, for example, would hardly gain much experience in joint operations), and disparities in the career paths of officers in the various Services will have to be resolved (the Navy career path offers fewer opportunities for long staff tours than do those of the other Services).

If, however, Congress expects the Goldwater - Nichols Act to eliminate what it perceives as parochialism and inter-Service rivalry, it is likely to be disappointed. The problem lies in the nature of what Congress perceives as parochialism; it is less the result of a motivation to protect Service interests at all costs than it is the result of an appreciation by an officer of his Service's capabilities and value to the nation's defense. Such values are the result of the same socialization process that affects the individuals of any closely-knit organization, and those values are unlikely to be abandoned simply because an officer on the Joint Staff happens to work for the Chairman rather than the JCS as a corporate body. As with the provisions affecting the Unified and Specified commanders, then, the effectiveness of the provisions of the 1986 Act that apply to joint duty assignments and the Joint Staff in ending inter-Service rivalry are likely to be mixed. The mandated changes are useful in that they will likely give officers an appreciation for the problems and capabilities of other Services. Whether this will result in the hoped for compartmentalization of "service interests" and "national interests" in the minds of officers taught to believe that the two are the same (or at least compatible), however, is at best doubtful.

### C. THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Among the most highly publicized, and certainly the most controversial of the changes in the defense organizational structure mandated by the Goldwater - Nichols Act are those which affect the roles and authority of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Act designates the Chairman of the JCS as the "principal military advisor to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense" [Ref. 2, sec. 151]. Though he must still consult with other JCS members before rendering his advice, the



Chairman is to take measures to ensure that "the presentation of his own advice to the President, the National Security Council, or the Secretary of Defense is not unduly delayed by reason of the submission of the individual advice or opinion of another member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff" [Ref. 2, sec. 151(1)]. The Chairman is to control the agenda of the meetings of the JCS and direct the Joint Staff; other JCS members may submit agenda items for consideration, but the Chairman need only include them as he sees appropriate [Ref. 2, sec. 151(2)]. Further, it is up to the Chairman to "determine when issues under consideration by the Joint Chiefs of Staff shall be decided" [Ref. 2, sec. 152(2)(c)]. While the Chairman "may not exercise military command over the Joint Chiefs of Staff or any of the Armed Forces" [Ref. 2, sec. 151(2)(c)], he is to advise the Defense Secretary on "critical deficiencies" in the Armed Forces, and "the extent to which the program recommendations and budget proposals of the military departments and other components of the Department of Defense for a fiscal year conform with the priorities established in strategic plans and with the priorities established for the requirements of the unified and specified combatant commands" [Ref. 2, sec. 153(a)(4)(b)]. The Chairman shall submit "alternative program recommendations and budget proposals" as he deems necessary [Ref. 2, sec. 153(a)], and shall every three years "submit to the Secretary of

. . . submit to the Secretary of Defense a report containing such recommendations for changes in the assignment of functions (or roles and missions) to the armed forces as the Chairman considers necessary to achieve maximum effectiveness of the armed forces. [Ref. 2, sec. 153(b)]

To assist the Chairman in his duties, the Act created the post of Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to rank second (behind the Chairman) in the armed forces and whose duties include chairing meetings of the JCS in the Chairman's absence [Ref. 2, sec. 154].

Congress considered the provisions affecting the role of the JCS Chairman to be the most important of those in the bill. Indeed, until 1986 the Defense Reorganization Act was known as the Joint Chiefs of Staff Reorganization Act. The intent of Congress was to end the Service rivalries that were perceived as diluting the quality of the military advice to the President by giving the JCS Chairman an independent voice, the effective power to overrule the opinions of the parochial Service Chiefs:

The fundamental purpose of this bill is to refine the role of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The bill would enable the chairman . . . to transcend the

service-orientation of the respective service chiefs to provide clear-cut, objective military advice to the national command authorities. [Ref. 54, p. 2]

The effect of these changes in the JCS Chairman's role have been widely debated, both in Congressional hearings and in academic circles. As noted earlier, Navy Secretary Lehman testified before Congress that the provisions of the Act were a dangerous step toward the usurpation of civilian authority [Ref. 3]. Arguing that "at the heart of the matter is the danger of inordinate military control over the defense establishment and the inherent weakening of civilian controls" [Ref. 59, p. ii], members of the Hudson Institute posited that the Act would actually increase rather than eliminate parochialism and Service rivalry:

This . . . is based upon the clear historical fact that whenever the single Chief of Staff system has existed it has intensified rather than reduced interservice conflict. The only aspect of controversy which would be reduced is the amount of information which the civilian superiors would obtain regarding the differences of opinion, and the degree to which the public and the press would be aware of the differing opinions on which the survival of the nation might well depend . . . the services would well recognize the life-and-death nature of such a struggle as far as their assistance and contribution to national security would be involved. [Ref. 59, p. 5]

Despite the impassioned pleas of both proponents and critics, the effects of the 1986 Act are not likely to be nearly so dramatic as either suggest. The likelihood of a strong-willed JCS Chairman running roughshod over the Defense Establishment is as negligible as is the fulfillment of the hope that inter-Service rivalry will be eliminated; neither is likely because of safeguards built into the Act as the result of legislative compromise. If a JCS Chairman were not restrained from disregarding JCS advice by the historical lessons of the McNamara era, he would certainly be constrained by provisions of the Act that require him to "consult and seek the advice of the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff" and "inform the President, the National Security Council, or the Secretary of Defense, as the case may be, of the range of military advice and opinion" [Ref. 2, sec. 151]. Critics may charge that this provision applies only when the Chairman "considers appropriate" [Ref. 2, sec. 151(c)], but there are other safeguards built into the Act as well. When requested, the members of the JCS may provide advice "individually or collectively" on any particular issue [Ref. 2, sec.151(c)]. Further, "after first informing the Secretary of Defense, a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff may make such recommendations to Congress relating to the

Department of Defense as he considers appropriate" [Ref. 2, sec. 151(f)]. It is difficult to believe that a Service Chief would not invoke this provision if he seriously felt that interests vital to his Service were threatened by a domineering JCS Chairman. With this provision, Congress has in effect retained its role as the budgetary court of final appeal.

The net effect of the Goldwater - Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 will likely to be to increase efficiency and improve coordination in some areas of the defense establishment. It does not, however, contain provisions for the fundamental changes to the defense organizational structure that would be necessary to end forever the Service disagreements over policy that are perceived by Congress as inter-Service rivalry. While the bill legislates authority, it will not legislate cooperation. As observed by Representative Samuel Stratton:

We make a serious mistake if we think Congress by legislation can stifle the interplay of ideas in our military establishment. In fact, if that is really our plan, we will be going down the road to disaster.

My second concern is that if we are indeed trying to move in the direction of a single chief of staff, it amazes me what insignificant proposals this bill mandates in order to bring about this supposedly dramatic change. They are two.

Number One. It provides the chairman a deputy. Big deal! How giving him an AA adds anything that will revolutionize our military capability I am unable to discern.

Secondly, the bill makes the chairman the boss of the JCS staff, which currently amounts to some 300 or 400 souls. Nothing very revolutionary there either . . . No one becomes more wise or innovative by putting additional stars on his shoulders. Nor does being designated as Principal Military Advisor to the President improve the quality of his advice.

After all, no single man is intelligent enough to do this job all by himself. [Ref. 54, pp. 30-33]



## VII. CONCLUSION

The Goldwater - Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 stands as the latest in a series of Congressional attempts to provide, through legislation, for a defense organizational structure that would make the national defense planning process more efficient and end perceived inter-Service rivalry, while retaining the Service autonomy that is recognized as essential to the fostering of Service morale, *esprit de corps* and the development of policy alternatives. In effect, it is the latest in a series of attempts to legislate Service cooperation. Having attempted structural reform of the defense establishment in 1949 and functional reforms in 1958, and having found both wanting, the Congress in 1986 legislated a combination of structural and functional reforms of the Joint Chiefs of Staff organization designed to end Service bickering over budget allocations and Service roles and missions. The Goldwater - Nichols Act is yet another attempt to forge an organizational link between the process of defense policy formulation and the widely held belief that "if our defense program is to achieve maximum effectiveness, it must be genuinely unified" [Ref. 60, p. 2].

If history serves as a useful guide, however, the 1986 Defense Reorganization Act will be no more successful in ending the policy disagreements that are perceived as inter-Service rivalry than were previous attempts to legislate cooperation in 1949, 1953, and 1958. The Act may serve to increase the inputs of the Unified and Specified commanders into the defense budgetary process, and the designation of the JCS Chairman as the Principal Military Advisor to the President may well decrease the public's awareness of basic Service disagreements over policy. The 1986 Act, however, will be no more successful in ending Service rivalry and competition than were previous attempts to amend the 1947 National Security Act because the 1947 Act was itself the result of a compromise between two conflicting views over how basic defense policy should be formulated. In its periodic attempts to revise the 1947 Act, Congress has been faced with a dilemma:

A basic theme of defense reorganization efforts since World War II has been to preserve the valuable aspects of our traditional service framework while nonetheless achieving the united effort that is indispensable for our nation's security. President Eisenhower counseled that separate "service responsibilities and activities must always be only the branches, not the central trunk of the

national security tree." Unified effort is not only a prerequisite for successful command of military operations during wartime, today, it is also a prerequisite for strategic planning and for the effective direction of our defense program in peacetime. The organization of our service military leadership must facilitate this unified effort. The highest qualified military advice must be available to the President and the Secretary of Defense on a continuing basis. This must include a clear, single integrated military point of view. Yet, at the same time, it must not exclude well-reasoned alternatives. [Ref. 60, p. 3]

That these two goals - the development of a "single, integrated military point of view" and the fostering of "well-reasoned alternatives" - may well be structurally incompatible in the defense organization of a society as large, diverse and pluralistic as the United States is a point not often addressed by defense critics. The nurturing of a single military viewpoint is best served by the traditional Army concept of "top-down" policy formulation through outright military unification. The fostering of alternatives is best served by the concept of "bottom-up" policy development through compromise between autonomous Services, the concept favored by the Navy. Rather than resolving these fundamentally incompatible philosophies, however, Congress in 1947 attempted to accommodate both:

At the close of the Second World War, President Truman and General Marshall wanted a truly unified Armed Forces under a new Department of Defense. But resistance, particularly by the Navy, led to compromises. Many of the structural flaws . . . today in the Joint Chiefs of Staff system came about as the result of these compromises made back in 1947 which had the effect of preserving autonomy for the individual services. [Ref. 61, p. 47]

The failure of Congress to structurally resolve in 1947 the fundamental incompatibility between a philosophy centered upon Service autonomy and one based upon the concept of unification, and the subsequent failure of Congress to address the issue in each of the amendments to the 1947 National Security Act, is the direct cause of the "waste" and "inefficiency" that Congress perceives as being caused by the rampant "Service parochialism" and "inter-Service rivalry" within the defense establishment. The continual Congressional drives to end the alleged waste of resources caused by Service competition, however, the seemingly endless examples of inefficiency within the defense establishment that are cited in Congressional hearings as being the direct result of Service rivalry, obscure what is perhaps the most important and fundamental question of all: what does the nation expect of its defense establishment?

• If, indeed, efficiency in the allocation of resources is the goal to be set for the Department of Defense, then it can be easily achieved through the creation of a general staff system composed of an independent cadre of career military officers. Such a group of separately trained officers, organized under an independent promotion system, would easily be able to "rise above Service interests," set unbiased military goals and priorities, and tailor the defense budget to achieve the most efficient allocation of funds. The goal of the military, however, is not efficiency. In peacetime it is the development of plans and force structures designed to protect the nation and promote its interests throughout the entire spectrum of possible threats. In preparing for such a broad range of contingencies, efficiency and agreement are less important than is the development and pursuit of as many options as are possible. The uniformed military must be concerned with the development of the most *effective* response possible for every conceivable threat to the national interest; efficiency, while desirable, is not a primary goal but a secondary consideration.

This, then, is the real danger of the call for military unification. By continually amending the 1947 National Security Act in an effort to centralize defense decision-making power and thereby increase efficiency, Congress runs the very real risk of creating a military less interested in its primary goal, the nation's security, than in the secondary goal of maintaining efficiency by stifling creativity, imagination, and the willingness to question the status quo. On the consequences of this type of "goal displacement," sociologist Amitai Etzioni has written:

It is important to note that while efficiency and effectiveness tend to go hand in hand, they not always do . . . over-concern with efficiency may limit the scope of activities for an organization, while effectiveness may require a large variety of activities . . . . Most organizations under pressure to be rational are eager to measure their efficiency. Curiously, the very effort - the desire to establish how we are doing and to find ways of improving if we are not doing as well as we ought to do - often has quite undesired effects from the point of view of the organizational goals. Frequent measuring can distort the organizational efforts because, as a rule, some aspects of its output are more measurable than the others . . . . The distortion consequences of over-measuring are larger when it is impossible or impractical to quantify the more central, substantive output of an organization . . . . [Ref. 62, p. 9]

Goal displacement in industry can result in the loss of profits. For the military, it can mean national embarrassment or defeat. As detailed by Colonel Henry Summers in his book *On Strategy*, it was just such a displacement of organizational goals that



led to the U.S. defeat in Vietnam, a situation where the military became so concerned with the efficiency of its tactics that it lost sight of the strategic reasons for being in Vietnam to begin with. Summers cites a telling conversation that took place in Hanoi in 1975:

"You know you never defeated us on the battlefield," said the American colonel. The North Vietnamese colonel pondered this remark a moment. "That may be so," he replied, "but it is also irrelevant." [Ref. 63, p. 21]

In peacetime, the development of options and alternatives for dealing with the wide array of threats facing the U.S. in a complex world depends upon the open airing of disagreements between well-intentioned and honest men. In this, the current system of Service autonomy reflects the American political system of checks and balances that prevents the tyranny of a majority view from being imposed upon the ideological minority. As described by James Madison in the tenth Federalist paper ("The Size and Variety of the Union as a Check on Faction"):

There are again two methods of removing the causes of faction: the one, by destroying the liberty which is essential to its existence; the other, by giving everyone the same opinions, the same passions, and the same interests . . . . The second expedient is as impracticable as the first would be unwise. As long as the reason of man continues fallible, and he is at liberty to exercise it, different opinions will be formed . . . the protection of these faculties is the first object of government. [Ref. 64, p. 131]

As in the governing of a diverse and pluralistic society, the development of the variety of options so vital to the peacetime military strategic planning process depends upon an organizational structure that mandates the consideration of the diverse and often conflicting viewpoints that arise from the protection of enlightened self-interests. Because in 1986 the legislature again failed to resolve the structural incompatibilities institutionalized in the 1947 National Security Act, Congress will not with the Goldwater - Nichols Act of 1986 end Service rivalry and competition. The danger is that, someday, it might.

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